

SHANGHAIED OUT
OF 'FRISCO IN
THE NINETIES

HIRAM P. BAILEY

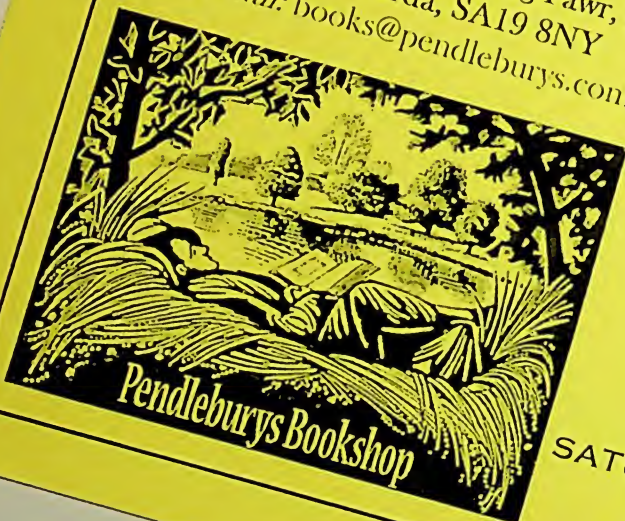
HEATH CRANFORD

PENDLEBURYS THE BOOKSHOP IN THE HILLS

Garreg Fawr, Porthyrhyd,
Llanwrda, SA19 8NY Tel: 01558 650 840

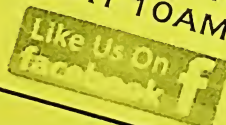
Email: books@pendleburys.com

www.pendleburys.com



FOR SECONDHAND AND
ANTIQUARIAN BOOKS,
PRINTS AND
ASSOCIATED
COLLECTABLES

OPEN:
TUESDAY TO
SATURDAY 10AM - 5PM.

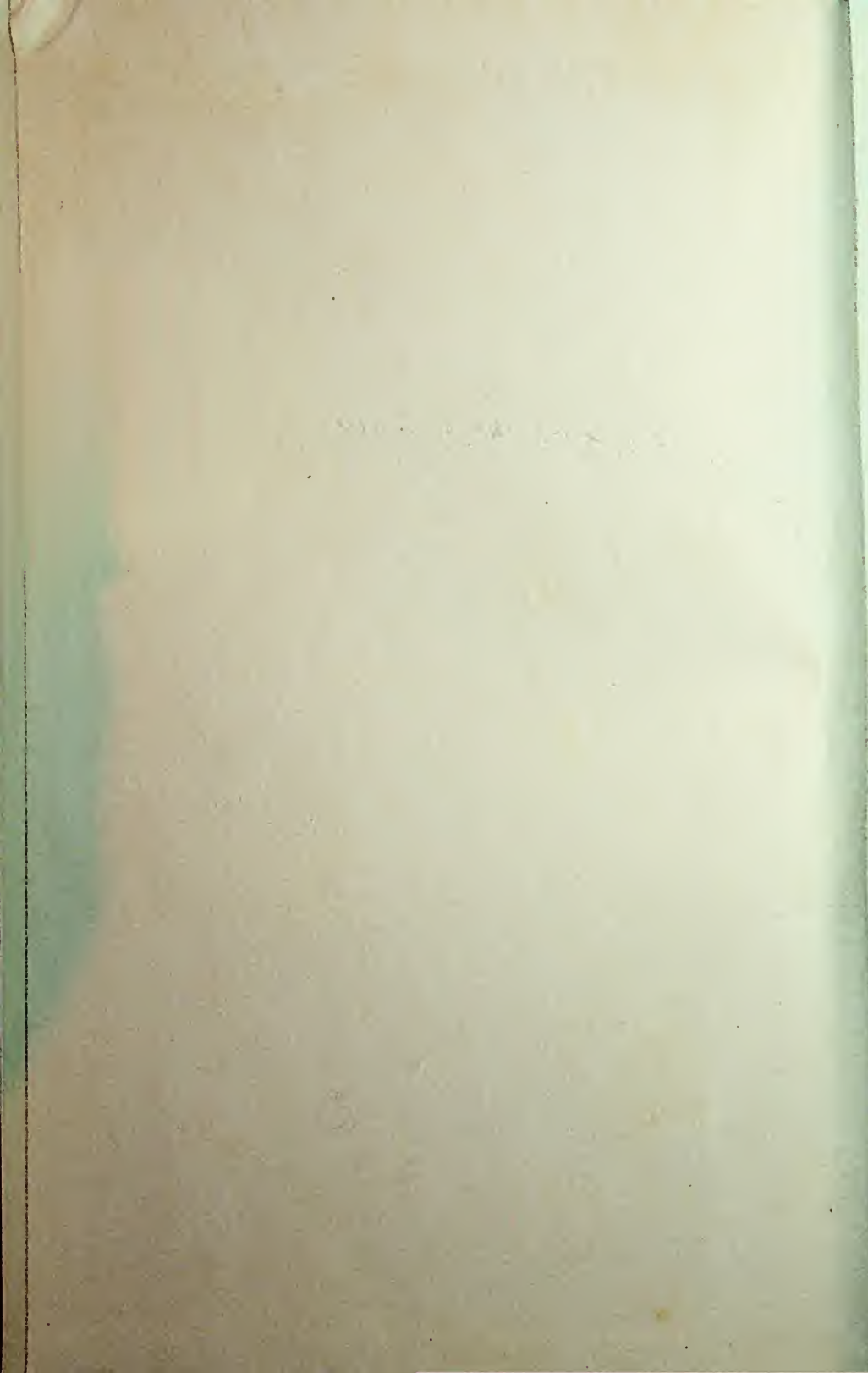


Fine Firth

P
£10

116.

210907



SHANGHAIED OUT OF 'FRISCO
IN THE 'NINETIES



"ONE OF THE ALSO RANS," by kind permission of the Artist, J. SPURLING.

SHANGHAIED OUT OF 'FRISCO IN THE 'NINETIES

BY

HIRAM P. BAILEY, F.R.G.S.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY
J. SPURLING, 4 DRAWINGS,
AND 2 PHOTOGRAPHS

"There's a little brown rabbit that sits up aloft and—
 smiles, smiles, smiles,
As we gaze in the sea—the deep blue sea—
 We catch its reflection for—
 miles, miles, miles."—*Anon.*

HEATH CRANTON LIMITED
6 FLEET LANE LONDON E.C.4

1925

*Printed in Great Britain by
M. F. Robinson & Co., Ltd., The Library Press, Lowesloft.*

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO
R. R. WHITTAKER,
EDITOR OF "THE YORKSHIRE EVENING POST,"
AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS EVER KINDLY
INTEREST.

CHART TO ILLUSTRATE COURSE OF AUTHOR'S VOYAGE



PREFACE

It is to be understood that the author is not a sailor, but merely a civil engineer Shanghaied as one. His knowledge of sea life on board an American four-master in the late 'Nineties grew gradually ; and this maritime gradation, with the attendant excitement, he wishes to impart comprehensively, and at the same rate to the reader.

Although the author provides at the end of the book an extensive glossary of all unavoidable sea terms used in the narrative, he has nevertheless avoided purely technical sea-faring terms as much as possible, in the belief that many an excellent sea narrative has failed to interest the landsman because of, not only the inclusion of cryptic maritime slang, but also because of the too technical nomenclature employed.

The author has confined himself rather to incidents—barbarous, exciting, and humorous—among and between the men and their officers, than to descriptions of the sea and sky in "foreign parts." Incidental pastimes, too, such as the catching of flying-fish, hooking bonita with a piece of linen on a hook as they dashed athwart the bows ; capturing albatross with a "brass bit" astern ; and descriptions of ocean bird-life generally, he has purposely avoided, knowing that such have all been both frequently and accurately described before.

The author but depicts the life in the ship in which he was shanghaied—a normal American ship in many ways, yet exceptional in some. The American sailing ships in his day worked men to death, but resurrected them with good and ample meals ; whereas in British

ships, at that time, and prior thereto, the reverse order prevailed. Discipline also in an American ship was, generally speaking, much better maintained and more rigorous than in the British deep-water men ; not that the British officer failed inherently in his control of men—far from it—but rather that when trouble came British laws and feeling invariably aligned themselves with the men. This left the mercantile marine officer practically helpless to enforce real discipline. The American maritime laws on the contrary (so our officers told me) protect adequately the officer. And heaven knows from the horrible onslaughts, both verbal and physical, of some forecastle men, they need it.

To gentlemen of the blue cloth, and check cloth, on both sides of the "big drink" the author commends this book, hoping they will enjoy, with all its imperfections, a yarn from a professional man shanghaied.

THE AUTHOR.

HULL, ENGLAND,

September, 1925.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I IN "CALICO JIM'S"	15
II "PULLING THE MONKEY'S TAIL"	20
III HUNGRY SHARKS	26
IV THE "OLD MAN" STRUGGLES WITH ALGEBRA	32
V MUTINY?	43
VI JEHOSEPHAT RATTLES	55
VII DEAD 'ORSE	62
VIII TRACT "STUFF"	76
IX A "BURST" ASHORE	83
X "BAGGAGE!"	90
XI "SEA POSSUM"	97
XII INTO THE PACIFIC	104
XIII ALL HANDS ON DECK	113
XIV IN THE CYCLONE'S GRIP	117
XV A TRAGEDY IN THE DARK	123
XVI THE SCALPING OF BEN	129
XVII THE STRANGE DEATH OF OLD MAN SMITH	136
XVIII AFTER SIXTY-FOUR DAYS	154
XIX A SWIM FOR LIFE IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY	165
XX L'ENVOI	176
GLOSSARY OF SEA TERMS	179

“ Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen.”

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. ONE OF THE "ALSO RANS." FROM A PAINTING BY J. SPURLING	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. CHART	<i>Page vi.</i>
3. PLAN OF DECK	12
4. TO A TOWERING MASS OF CORDAGE EMBALMED IN SINISTER LIGHT BEN AND I WERE ROWED—DEAD TO THE WORLD	<i>To face page 19</i>
5. ONE NIGHT WE STOLE FROM IQUIQUE WHEN ALL THE CHILIAN COAST A SOLEMN STILLNESS HELD	,, 104
6. THE SEAS WERE STILL FOAMY AND LUMPY	,, 129
7. "AIN'T HE A PLATEFUL!"	,, 149
8. MY FINGERS CLUTCHED CONVULSIVELY A LARGE MOORING RING	,, 174
9. CONDEMNED TO BE A MISERABLE COAL- HULK, UP SOME FOETID AFRICAN RIVER	,, 177

Four-masted Barque.

Length 294'0".

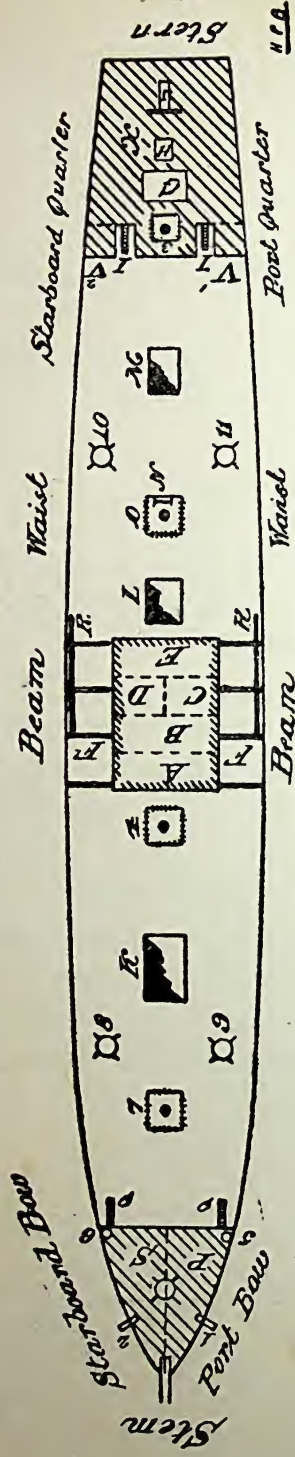
Net Ton^s. 2304.

Beam 43'0".

Pop. 36'0".

Loaded Draught 22'4".

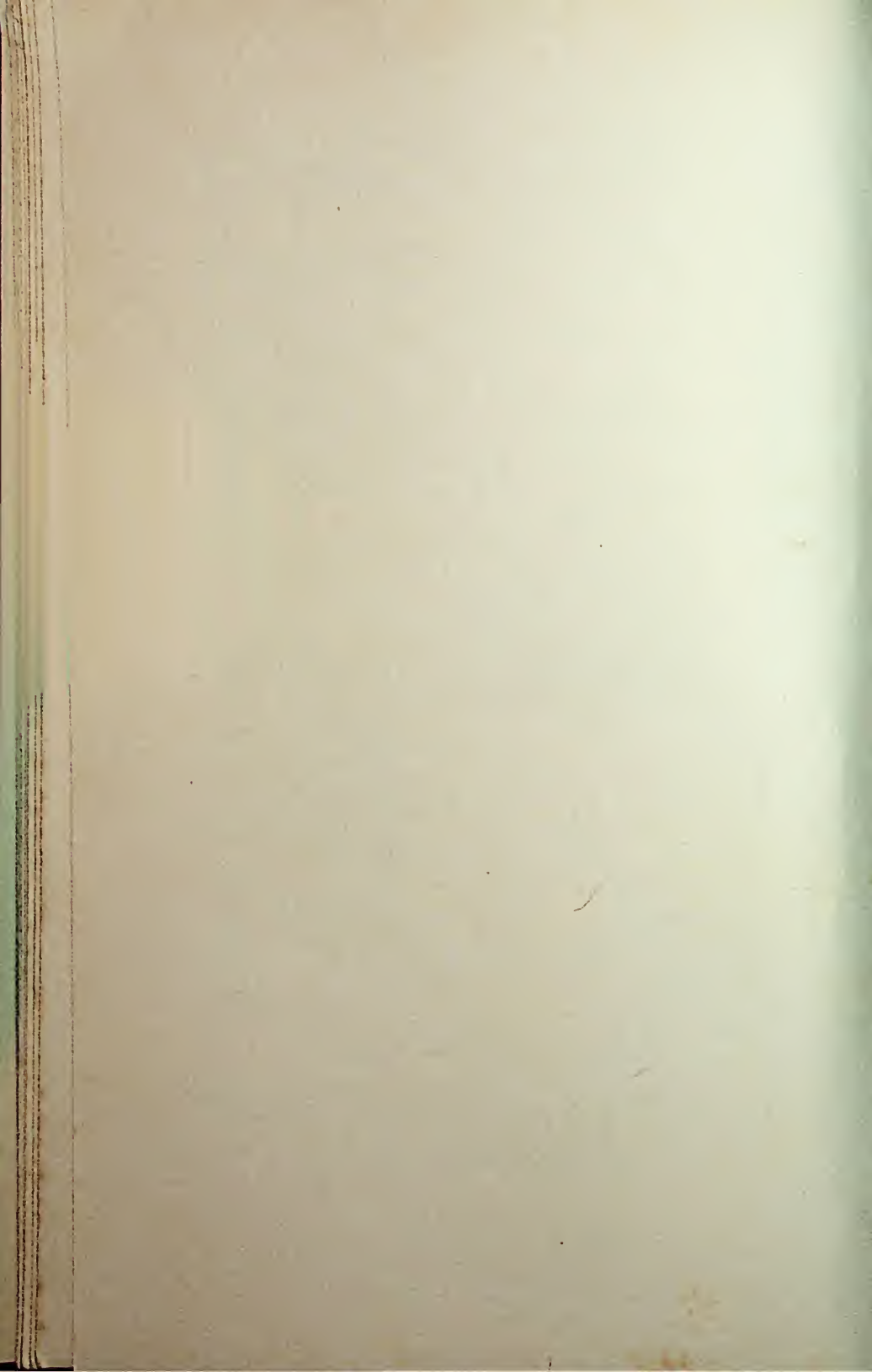
Forecastle 34'0".



Plan of Deck.

A	Carpenter's Shop.	P	Lodging for the Port-watch.
B	Galley.	Q	Ladder or Gangways from Deck to Forecastle-head.
C	Berth for Carpenter and Bo'sun.		
D	Paint Locker.	R	Spare Spars (Lashed).
E	Berth for Sailmaker, Cook and Steward..	S	Lodging for the Starboard watch.
F	Boat Skids, or Horses.	V ²	Starboard Half-deck.
G	Chart-house.	V ¹	Port Half-deck (Sometimes used as a Lamp-room).
H	Cabin Skylight.	X	Poop.
I	Ladder or Gangways from Deck to Poop		
J	Wheel.	I & 2	Catheads.
K	Fore-hold.	3	Jigger (Mast).
L	Main-hold.	4	Main (Mast).
M	After-hold.	5	Port Lighthouse.
N	Ship's Pumps.	6	Starboard Lighthouse.
O	Mizzen (Mast).	7	Fore (Mast).
		8, 9, 10, 11	Deck Capstans.

See Diagram on page 12



SHANGHAIED OUT OF 'FRISCO IN THE 'NINETIES

CHAPTER I

IN "CALICO JIM'S"

In these unromantic days in Great Britain and North America, to be shanghaied is not a likely fate. But in the early 'Nineties in England, and the late 'Nineties in North America, the heinous practice flourished. I suffered, therefore I know. Its miseries I have outgrown: the folly that led to it I have long since discarded: but the romance involved in it I shall ever carry with me into the deep blue of the Great Beyond.

In the soft mellow light of a late summer evening, Ben Macfarlane and I strolled listlessly down Glen's Alley, near Battery Point, and came in full view of the harbour of San Francisco. I am not sure whether the grand four-masted vessels we saw before us, always referred to in the feminine gender, induced the silent Ben to break out suddenly and betray himself or not, but out his secret came—a woman, of course. Wonderful eyes . . . looking into them you looked into Paradise . . . cheeks like sun-touched peaches . . . ears, shell-like . . . pearly teeth . . . raven hair . . . Temper? no meaning to her, for, as I gathered, was she not heaven condensed into five feet three? Yes!

Ben had it badly.

But Violette was in Australia! And as he uttered her name softly—almost purred it—he smiled the melancholy smile of the forsaken lover. He divulged the devastating fact that she had sailed away about a month or two previously as a governess to the child of a rich

Canadian. But she still loved Ben—so I understood.

"I shall never see her again," he moaned. (Ben was a melancholy devil.)

"You never can tell," I returned, "for life is a theatre wherein the women turn up both at awkward and fortunate moments, especially in matrimonial schemes."

"Too far," he almost howled. "Too expensive, Australia, to go after her."

"True," I said quietly; for all men have found it expensive going after women.

"Ah, well," said he at last and brightening, "we'll turn right now into this saloon and get a gin-sling, or a whisky-cocktail to straighten my nerves out a bit."

Looking round we found ourselves in a rather coarse, and certainly common Battery Point saloon, kept by one "Calico Jim," a Chilean as I subsequently learned. (This same gentleman some years later shanghaied six San Francisco policemen sent to arrest him, and was eventually relentlessly followed and shot dead by one of them on the streets of Callao in Chile, South America.)

We were about to return outside, not liking the general atmosphere of the place, when a tallish, high-cheeked, square-jawed, adder-eyed, raw type of man arrested us with his silvery-toned voice—

"Say, yoo two, ef yer want a lonesome conversassy, jest vamoos inter thet er room there." (He indicated a door at the opposite end). "Yoo'll be sure all possum in there . . . out of the bar-room heat and thet. . . . Jest ring fur yer poisons."

We sat down in that chair-spangled fatal room. Really it proved refreshingly cool; and through the window overlooking the harbour I noticed in the fading evening light several large and graceful sailing ships: some deeply laden and at rest as if cut in cameo, whilst others, quite light, with their yards already "cock-billed," were evidently preparing to proceed immediately up the

Sacramento River to Crocket or Port Costa to obtain their grain cargoes for Europe.

Presently our attention became arrested by loud and persistent angry voices issuing from the adjacent bar-room.

"Sure!" cried one, "there's out there in the bay now the *Benares*, a fine four-masted barque, all British crew, and a record-breaker, too, I guess; no need for the crimps to shanghai any poor devil on her."

"That's all right; but I guess a good many of the crew would run if they knew how to get to the Klondyke," commented a gruff voice. (It was then the height of the Klondyke gold boom.)

"Aye," broke in another, "there's the *Royalshire* bound for England, fine barque; also the *Queen Margaret* (since sunk off Cornwall); the *London Hill*, the *Lancing*, the *Washington*, and the——"

"*Washington*!" screamed someone; "*Washington*! Curse her to flames! . . . She can't get a crew. . . . God help the men that go to sea in her! Fine vessel all right, but . . . I have been . . . Look at this. . . . The first mate, a blue nose (Nova Scotian), did it with a belaying-pin. He kicked the ribs in of a man, shanghaied, with his sea-boot the first night at sea from Baltimore. . . . If ever I come across that Hell's-meat ashore, anywheres, as sure as God is in Heaven, I shall——"

I lost the after purport of his angry sailor's torrent, but I heard a heavy emphatic fist strike the table. He meant it.

And this was immediately followed by the entry of Calico Jim behind a tray of sparkling glasses.

Over our drinks, I conveyed to Ben casually—for Ben knew nothing of sea life, and I but a little more—that it was common talk about the harbour that the *Washington* was putting to sea with two clergymen, three bar-tenders, four agricultural labourers—all shanghaied—

among a more or less nautical crew of thirty men ; further, that four of the crew, who had never been to sea, were already in irons (locked up, and perhaps trussed up !) and ghastly desperate !

"But what is the meaning of 'shanghaied' ?" inquired Ben, looking puzzled.

I was about to explain in detail when Ben turned and ordered from Callico Jim two more "stiff 'uns." "It does your nerves good," he added to me.

The man brought them, and, joining in our conversation, butted the matter of shanghaieing clean out of my mind. Calico Jim, who now sat at the same table with us, seeing our glasses empty, very suavely invited us to have a "short one on him."

Not wishing to appear unsociable, and the weather being warm, and our throats dry, we did. And though it is a long time ago now, I can still remember a strange but pleasant sort of drowsy feeling stealing over me whilst drinking; and that scoundrel's evil face intently watching me. It never occurred to me why.

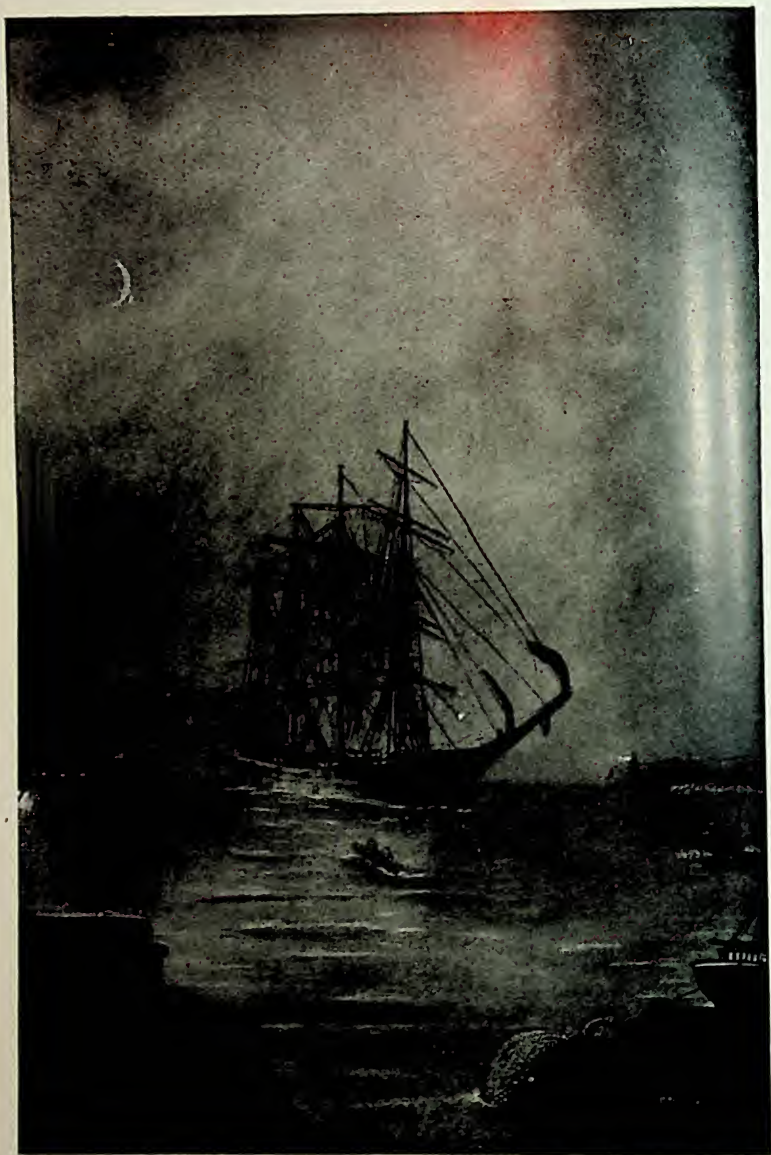
Ben appeared also to be more silent than ever, and in the midst of dozily looking him over in came two more drinks with a negro supporting them. These Calico Jim hailed as "refreshers."

With the idea of shaking off our lethargy we drank these hideous refreshers. How green we were !

Soon Ben seemed half asleep. I began to think it somewhat strange that both of us should be so sleepy at this early hour of the evening—especially Ben, for he was not only an active boxer of considerable local renown, but an aquatic instructor at the San Francisco baths, and in an hour due to give a lesson to his pupils. But there he sat, nodding !

I was about to shake him, when, strange to say, my feet and arms refused to do my bidding. I sank back in my chair. A dreamy delight rapidly took possession





"TO A TOWERING MASS OF CORDAGE EMBALMED IN SINISTER LIGHT,
BEN AND I WERE ROWED—DEAD TO THE WORLD."

Facing p. 19

of me now. It must be the weather, I thought—soon be all right—and yet——

"Couple of fine men" were among the last words that floated down to my ears as if spoken from an immense distance through a long, long funnel. "I guess the crew kain be made up with these . . . skipper promised forty dallars apiece; forty dol——"

"Dat am so, sah! . . . Ah, ah!" and I floated away from this world on the sound of a negro's laugh.

"Now then, there! Tumble up! Goin' to sleep till moss grows out of yer—tumble up! Curse yer! Get yer legs under yer, will you?—You're at sea!"

Dazed, very dazed, I staggered to my feet. Ben, lying on the fo'c'sle head by the knight-heads, lay as still as a log. The first mate lounged over to him, and unable to rouse him by words, viciously kicked him!

I wondered if he were the first mate of the accursed *Washington*.

Gradually Ben turned over. I went to him and shook him vigorously. But no response coming forth and a bucket being handy, I slipped it over the bows, and dashed some of the cold contents into Ben's face. (I did not wish that Ben should be kicked again.)

This treatment proved efficacious.

"What—what is all this?" asked Ben at last, knitting his brows over half-intelligent eyes that gazed over ship and sea.

"It is the answer to your question of last night, Ben," I answered.

"What do you mean? Am I——"

"Yes!—shanghaied!"

His jaw dropped.

"But, Ben, it also means you are shanghaied to Sydney, Australia—the place where your fiancée——"

His eye flashed to the flashpoint limit of 99.5. Love! (Quaint lad, Ben.)

CHAPTER II

"PULLING THE MONKEY'S TAIL"

"Who did this?" asked Ben presently, as he wiped some blood from his face.

"The mate," I answered quietly. "But do not do anything, Ben," I added hastily, laying my arm on his sleeve, as I saw his old British temper rapidly rising. "Just be possum. The ship's officers are almighty here. They can be brutish, hellish, almost murder if they wish—some do! . . . Were you to avenge this cowardly assault upon you right now with your fists, he might suddenly seize a belaying-pin and knock your brains out with it. In the courts ashore, he would plead self-defence and—ship mutiny! Such a powerful plea, in all probability, would get the scoundrel off. . . . No, listen to me in this: wait until you step ashore, then you can level up, either legally or—well—in your own natural manner."

Ben grunted, but I saw that he had listened. Besides, a corpse was not much good to his fiancée, Violette. Perhaps this clinching thought had struck him.

"Now let us show we are willing to work, Ben. It is best."

At this moment we were gruffly ordered aft to be put into our respective watches, although hours ago the regular ship's watches had been already set—the starboard watch taking first turn. As we dropped from the fo'c'sle, I saw by Ben's face that he had not forgotten that cowardly kicking whilst under the influence of dope. Neither had I.

Eventually we found ourselves placed together in the starboard watch ; at which we felt exceedingly glad.

The port-watch being on deck, we joined the starboard watch below. We entered into the cool, iron-bound, spacious but cheerless fore-castle. As we went, I had stopped on the way, and had learned from an expensive brass plate screwed to the poop that we were aboard the *General Gordon*¹—she now sails under another name.

The *General Gordon* was a four-masted barque, built of steel, and about 300 feet long, as far as I can remember, and perhaps 40 feet beam (width). From the deck she looked a noble thing of life, and in her full suit of canvas I felt as though I rode on the back of a great white bird skimming the ocean swells. She had two decks, the upper one sheathed in timber planking. The vessel carried a crew of about thirty.

As Ben and I entered the fo'c'sle to "break off a chunk of sleep" before our own watch commenced four hours hence, Ben observed that he had just learned from an A.B., who had sailed in the *Washington* on her last voyage, that we had shipped as our first mate the cruellest brute on two legs afloat—the late mate of the *Washington*. This was, indeed, bad news. Ben had also learned from another sailor, who had signed the regular ship's articles, that we were first bound for Mazatlan, a Mexican port then to Iquique, a Chilian port, and thence to Sydney Australia.

"Well, Ben," I commented, "we might, with good luck, manage to give the vessel the slip at the first stop, and tramp either up the coast, or to the Rio Grande, until we reached the United States again, eh? Our only chance!"

But Ben suddenly looked pensive and undecided.

¹ This is but a fictitious name, chosen haphazardly. The real name of the vessel is withheld for reasons which the reader will well appreciate when his perusal of the narrative is completed.—AUTHOR.

Violette, I guessed, pulled ardently in Sydney. He was like a needle between two magnets. He scratched his head; Violette scratched his heart; and he stared over the Pacific as if in an effort to see her.

"Anyway, we shall see," I concluded. And we left it at that. I felt the first port of call had lost!

At eight bells (noon) the starboard watch came on deck. On the whole, they were a strange-looking lot. The second mate was in command, and, to judge from his face, a very decent fellow; and by his breath, a lover of pickled onions.

Ben's and my first task at sea comprised helping two other men in "pulling the monkey's tail" or, as it is sometimes termed, "pulling the bear." The interesting process consists in four disinterested men dragging about the main deck a cumbersome wooden box heavily laden, to whose bottom a layer of glass or sand-paper is fixed. By this process the decks are kept scrupulously clean, and the men kept from becoming fat. The work is on-exciting, except in heavy weather, when great green seas rush and tumble irresponsibly over the waist of the ship or forecastle. Then it is, indeed, necessary to drop the "tail" suddenly and tear madly towards the fife-rail, or to anything fixed in order to avoid one's life taking up a new address.

Often Ben and I and our mates, just missing our chance for the fife-rail, have been swilled holus bolus into the scuppers like damaged tomatoes before a market-man's hose-pipe.

As Yank Heins, a German in our watch, once truthfully exclaimed, "Dis all-fired job vos ze awflest ting to rid folk of de fat dat Gott zends."

He kept his, however. (The miracle of the ship!) Moreover, the skipper, or Old Man, as he is termed on shipboard, "zends de job," as the German put it, and he *must* be obeyed.

And this latter fact I heard old Smith, an A.B. also in our watch, earnestly impress upon a still rebellious Ben, who, looking aloft at the yards, wonderingly asked with much apprehension whether men were ever expected to "climb up there into those branches."

The weather-beaten old shell-back assured Ben that such was the case. Moreover, it was work expected to be done in all weathers.

Ben looked up 175 ft. of mast. Ben shivered.

"Just keep one hand for the ship, and the other for yourself," the old sailor added confidentially. (We never forgot this, only we reversed the order of the advice.)

We also learned, as we pulled the bear, that the length of our duty or watch consisted of four hours' work and four hours' rest—and in great stress of weather, no rest; that the ship's officers worked "four hours on" and "eight hours off"; and that time was recorded to the crew by the striking of the ship's bell—eight bells meant 8 p.m., and one stroke for every half an hour up till midnight, and then the process and series began again. We learned that the watch from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. is divided into two equal parts, and known as "dog watches"; this in order to break or change the run of the ordinary watches so that the crew may have different watches, or period of duty, every day and every night. That the second dog watch was the most delightful time on board—for the forecastle men: no work, smoking time, yarn time.

Yes, Ben and I heard and learned many maritime things from that hoary and kindly disposed old salt. And truly he was very old; much too old for life before the mast. So, by the time we were off the south coast of Southern California, of which we caught a longing but fleeting glimpse, we had learned the compass card, and could, in very easy weather, steer the ship, or, in ship's language, "stand our trick at the wheel."

We had also been aloft several times—at first very gingerly—and found that the anthropoidal process was not half as bad as we anticipated. But what of it in heavy weather? Ugh!

Fortunately, our heads remained unaffected by heights, and moreover neither of us, thank God, suffered from seasickness; indeed our only stomach trouble, so far, had been hunger. As the melancholy Ben put it, "a nasty void just here," and he indicated.

"Slush," the lazy, impertinent negro cook, served out tea to the crew, which probably had been made from two tea-leaves. His galley bread, too, might have found its true sphere of usefulness as plaster-of-Paris. One could twist it and twist it, and turn it, and turn it about in one's mouth expectantly until one's eyes bu'ged out like hat-pegs and took upon themselves the ardent intensity of those of a gold-fish. But no use. Dead failure! most awkward bread I have ever known.

Once or twice we smashed up a few sea-biscuits into dust with a belaying pin, and with the aid of one or two of the crew, who had brought a few pots of cheap jam on board, would throw into the virgin heap a handful of jam. This delectable mess we poured into a rough canvas bag (kindly but surreptitiously made for us by the sail-maker) and handed it to Slush to boil for a while.

That went down! What a luxury!

No one but those who have served before the mast in a "hungry ship" can appreciate the extreme delight of this kind of batter pudding. But American ships (not Canadian) are, as a general rule, much better provided with food than British ones. In this respect we were exceptional.

The meat for the crew comprised, I verily believe, promiscuous scraps of discarded harness leather and old boot-soles from the American boot factories. Well and frequently, if not artistically, placed among the rampant

meat chunks were blue, green and yellow-speckled lumps of fat, which, though adding greatly to the colour scheme of the whole, gave rise to much conjecture in my mind as to their digestive properties. But we ate it—and we lived! More—we thrived! We, too, must have been made of leather.

It was during one of these meals *de luxe* that I earnestly informed Ben of the fact that, come what may, I should give the ship the slip at Mazatlan. The quixotic Ben nodded in his quiet melancholy way and murmured: "I'll help," but he did not add that he would come. Love is wonderful.

CHAPTER III

HUNGRY SHARKS

Next evening, nine days out from San Francisco, found us standing on deck waiting orders to bring the ship to anchor. Hours ago we had taken in our stunsails—a class of sail rarely employed after the 'Nineties. And now, having taken in our courses also, we expected orders to take in some of our light sails.

We were standing off in some ten fathoms of water about two miles from shore, for the littoral here is shallow—so I understood from the “nipper.”

Presently the orders came to take in jibs and some other light canvas. My heart beat with excitement, for right here was I to make my attempt to gain the shore. Two watery miles separated me from freedom; but that distance in a calm, warm sea I felt to be well within my powers. I hoped the latter end of the evening might be veiled in pitch darkness.

Heavens! Had it so been——!

“Get anchors ready for letting go!” rapped out the mate.

“Aye, aye, sir,” came the answering response from the bo’sun.

This last preparation made, we came up to anchorage with the upper topsails, spanker, and fore-topmast staysail. The ship, having got into a good position, the helm was put over to throw all aback. As soon as the ship gathered sternway we ran down our topsails and dropped anchor. We then veered out ninety fathoms of chain, and when it became taut we let go the second anchor. We now commenced to heave steadily on the first anchor

until there remained about forty-five fathoms on each. Next, we received orders—accompanied by many unnecessary though picturesque curses—to get the shackles handy for clearing hause.

A few minutes later, the starboard watch went below. I intended to make my attempt to escape about five bells (10.30 p.m.). Little time, therefore, remained to snatch a couple of hours' sleep—for I felt dog-tired—and eat a sea-biscuit or two.

"Ben," I whispered, as I gently tugged his arm. Ben jumped awake in a moment. "Ben, I'm ready to make the get-away."

We prepared to leave the forecastle.

"Half a moment," whispered Ben, very arrestingly. "This"—and he fumbled in the sweat-soaked lining of his cap—"this is a dispatch (telegram) I received from her giving her address at Sydney."

"Well?"

"Jest send a dispatch to her right away when you reach the shore. Jest say: 'Coming,'" and by matchlight he looked pleadingly into my eyes.

"But I have neither money nor personal possessions to pay for it. That crimp at Battery Point cleaned me of everything—also you, I thought."

"Yes, he went through me too—the skunk! But somehow he overlooked this in the broken lining of my pocket," and he pressed an excellent pocket-knife into my hand—"Pawn tha-at!"

It was his only possession, except a torn checked shirt on his back, and a pair of well-tarred trousers. And even these, I verily believe, he would have pressed upon me were they negotiable, so anxious was he for my success, and the transmittance of his cablegram.

I sometimes wonder whether Violette ever gauged the full extent of dear old Ben's sacrifice and love. Few

women would fully understand. Truly, it was Ben's very all, for very love.

I accepted the knife, and his commission. Then, without further words, we stole out on deck with the light-footedness of two timber-wolves, following the deep shadow along the break of the fo'c'sle. It was a quiet, calm, dry, tropical night. The moon was beginning to rise. I must be quick. Already the rigging was beginning to catch touches of silver. We hastened towards the waist of the ship.

I was about to mount the rail (bulwark top) when suddenly I remembered. . . . "Ben," I whispered quickly, "the dispatch. . . . What name am I to sign when I hand it into the telegraph office?"

Ben hesitated. Then, looking furtively about him, he murmured in my ear—"Binky!"

I stared at Ben incredulously. Ben looked at me sheepishly.

Poor Ben!

I turned and scrambled deftly, but very silently, on to the rail top, and in a trice was hanging over the side with my hands. I then directed Ben under my breath to catch my wrists, in order that he could lower me still further and thus minimise my splash. Little distance was there to drop, for her freeboard showed no more than about 5 feet 6 inches below her rail.

"Ready, Ben?" And my wrists were held in his vice grip. "Ready?"

But Ben was staring wildly over my head into the water behind me!

"Let go, Ben!"

Instead, with one awful wrenching tug and desperate lift, he hauled me back aboard!

"Good God, Ben! What is the matter? . . . Are you mad!"

"Look!" he gasped.

I did—sharks !

For some minutes Ben and I stared stupidly at the dark triangular dorsal fins of the sharks silently cleaving the unruffled surface of the sea. I shivered. And then I wondered, as we caught sight of more distant ones, what fact brought these monsters about the ship. Presently I recalled an incident that had happened just as the starboard watch went below.

A very respectable and venerable sow, known on board as Mrs. Cape Horn (for she had successfully weathered that formidable Cape three times, and the troubles of two fat families), had now, for the first time, suffered a mishap with one of her offspring.

A double block falling from near the to'gan's'l upon one of the little Cape Horns had smashed its spine. It had been immediately bled and dressed. The blood had been washed down from the decks into the scupper whence it had trickled into the sea.

These ferocious monsters of the deep—in this part of the world twenty-five to thirty feet long, with little penetrating grey eyes—had, with their marvellous sense of smell, uncanny and almost unbelievable in its strength, and power of discrimination, scented the blood from afar, had crowded in at the early doors, and had diligently searched about for the feast. I was not the feast. Fortunately, neither Miss Cape Horn nor I provided the centre of interest. She had by her untimely, and timely, death saved my life !

I learned subsequently from old man Smith that in this part, at the entrance to the mouth of the Gulf of California, the sharks are always prowling about, and always hungry. Like the British navy—always up to something. Ever since that night I have always respected little fat pigs.

The above fact being borne in upon me, I silently communed with Ben. Abjectly we retraced our steps

along the deck, and stole away into our bunks more sobered and depressed than we cared to admit.

Next day, after coffee, at 5.30 a.m., we tumbled out on deck with all hands—for at anchor, all hands turn in all night, and turn out all day, with the exception of a chosen night watchman—to wash down the decks until 7.30 a.m. After this, in the words of the bos'un, "Yew commence work!" And at this hour, and in that latitude, the heat of the sun announced its presence unmistakably. Hell, I understood, was but an ante-chamber to this place.

"Gee! Ain't it warm!" observed the bos'un. "We shall shrivel up like blasted spiders on a hot shovel to-day. . . . If the devil was here, he'd go home to cool off!"

It certainly was hot. We found it necessary a little later on in the morning to wear our boots to ensure some degree of comfort to our feet. From the mate—whose duty commenced at 4 a.m. until 8 a.m.—I received orders to oil the hinges of the deck-ports, and then to help down in the forepeak to shift ship's stores. This latter place is an evil-smelling, pitch-dark den under the forecastle and approached through a scuttle (manhole).

Ben and I went for'ard. Ben approached the den in rather a novel fashion by falling into it. I earnt from him to avoid unnecessary speed. The steel ladder I found good enough for me.

Ben never said much at any time. He said less this time: he was stunned.

Coming round, he smiled in his own lugubrious way, and said, "Ten feet I guess?"

I nodded encouragingly, and soon we commenced work.

We moved what seemed countless cornery bags of "smelly" potatoes (the cheapest); bags of pig-meal (the best); bags of peas—for we received pea-soup on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with "blind alley" on

Sundays, the latter often without currants, which at first gave our stomachs quite a fright ; cans of preserved vegetables (cabin use) ; casks of salt meat for the crew ; and other stores.

We also sent up for present deck use bags of sea biscuits with their prime weevil inhabitants. Vegetarian ship-mates hate them ; others curse them. But, as the Old Man said, " they fill up."

CHAPTER IV

THE " OLD MAN " STRUGGLES WITH ALGEBRA

And all through the day our ears were dogged with the ceaseless whirl and rattle of the gins at the ends of the yard-arms and forestay taking in cargo. The mate—the man who had kicked Ben viciously when we first came aboard under the influence of dope—superintended, with knuckle-dusters (!) on his fingers, and manifold senseless expletives upon his lips.

This lot of cargo was stowed in the forehold accompanied by a babel of yells and mutterings in Mexican Spanish, and the deeply guttural curses from a German stevedore, who had long since drunk himself out of shape.

But at evening there came rest. The lighters and scows lying alongside the ship sank into silence, save for a guitar played by a pretty señorita seated on the afterdeck near the tiller.

Some of our crew, romantically inclined, made both ocular and verbal overtures, together with unmistakable nods, to obtain her society. But she only played for one—our second mate, I think: a fair, curly headed fellow, with bandy legs. He seemed to respond tentatively, with amorous intent, by means of a mouth organ.

Ben I remember watched them with a deep, far-away stare in his eye. His Sydney stare.

I still see that señorita in her boat off the coast of Mazatlan. Over there in the bright beams of the Mexican moon she sits and plays. I still see her jet-black hair

flying wild, and encircled with a rich tiara of white and yellow discs; her pure olive-skin face with the dark passionate eyes, and curled long eyelashes: her low, bare neck surrounded with a bead necklace and a heavy pendant: her gay skirt with longitudinal orange stripes; her bare brown legs with their little extremities ornamented with buck-skin beaded shoes that peep and steal in and out and about her like little white mice. Yes, I see her still, and my ears still hear as she plays that tense love tune of Old Mexico in the moonlit bay of Mazatlan.

But in the midst of her playing, from the cabin of her boat, a harsh peremptory command rang through the stirless evening air. She disappeared.

We all felt as though a light had blown out suddenly. "Being shanghaied is, after all, not so bad if it were more like this," I told myself.

From that memorable evening I understood for the first time my San Francisco pal Ben—the inner Ben. Curious how the silvery voice of a woman can teach so profoundly. Yes, quite curious.

And it so fell whilst giving this southern lady of the lighter some idle thoughts, as I polished the brass-work of the binnacle next day, that the monotonous voice of the Old Man's studious son fell upon my ears. He ground my ear-drums as with emery paper.

" $x + y$ multiplied by $x + y$ What is the confounded answer?"

Then he began again and again, " $x + y$ multiplied by $x + y$ " repeating aloud until, feeling his monotonous reiteration of x 's and y 's too much for me, I shot round and relieved both of us with—

" $x^2 + 2xy + y^2$."

Like the lash at the end of a whip he flung round: "Do you understand algebra?" Then, before I could speak he thumbed rapidly to the end of the book he carried. "You are right!" he cried a moment afterwards. And his eyes opened upon me with the utmost astonishment.

"Why, of course I am right," I returned. "It is but elementary algebra."

"Come down—but there, wait a moment," and he dived down the companion way into the cabin.

Ten minutes afterwards I heard the Old Man's thunderous voice up the companion ordering me below. I went.

And now follows one of the most fortunate bits of good fortune vouchsafed to me in my life.

Below, standing behind a long cigar, I found the Old Man—a man with a square frame put together some forty years ago perhaps: a frame put together to stay. To it had been fitted a hard weather-blown face. His mouth and chin were frozen firm: so also his voice, manner and eye-gleam. "He is handsome," I thought, "especially when his eye softens."

He eyed me up and down and up again searchingly, but quite dispassionately. "He is taking me all in," I said to myself.

"You are not much to look at in size," he said at last, "but Sonny"—he glanced at his son—"tells me you've got a head-piece. What do you know of mathematics?"—then suddenly—"Go out and take your boots off before coming into my cabin!"

I obeyed meekly and returned.

"Now then, tell me all you know!"

I explained quietly, and as best I could, that my folks had taken me when nine years old from America and sent me to one of the best Grammar Schools in England; that there I had eventually passed the College of Preceptors examination, also the Cambridge Local examination, both colleges making success in mathematics a *sine qua non* to obtain their coveted certificates, and that afterwards I studied civil engineering in Chicago, which embraced advanced mathematics and had, in short, really been at school all my life.

I went on to mention other scholastic attainments, which would sound too bombastic and egotistical to repeat here. But it had its value there. I also mentioned casually that I knew the Sheriff of San Francisco ; that he knew our family—a long promiscuous shot which found its mark, to judge by the sudden, but momentary jerk of his head.

He listened for some moments with puckered brow, looked at his son with ever-softening eyes, and then suddenly turning on me shot out—

"Teach Sonny here mathematics from now right on ! I'll fix your watch (my work on deck). Go for'ard !"

As I passed through the door he flung after me : "Say ! You'll find the work on this ship softer for yer from now on."

I was about to utter thanks when : "Belay yer jaw—for'ard !"

I went.

At our second interview later on he seemed less blunt towards me. Just ordered me to wash my feet before walking upon his holy-stoned and white-seamed cabin floor. (This I always did afterwards.) He even smiled once ! I found now that in future much of my day had to be devoted to his son's mathematical education, interspersed with the cleaning and trimming of the ship's oil lamps ; that I was to teach him in the cabin, and attend to the wants of the lamps by using the port half-deck—a squarish room on the left-hand side of the poop ; that my sleeping quarters, too, were changed to the other half-deck among the ship's apprentices.¹ That I was to join the idlers—the ship's carpenter ("Chips"), cook, steward, and sailmaker—in the matter of hours, and work from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m., and also turn in all night, ordinarily : that in stress of weather, I was to help at *anything*.

¹ See glossary page.

Delighted I felt myself to be. Not the least of that delight lay in the fact that I should in future be free and independent practically from the brutal attentions of that Hell-spawn—the kicking mate, who feared neither judge nor God, and who hated all seamen.

Within an hour, I had moved my fo'c'sle bed (one of the "donkey breakfasts" left behind by one of the last crew who "ran" when the ship reached San Francisco) into my new abode, little thinking then that in heavy weather the half-deck is the most dangerous part of the ship—if one is afraid of drowning in bed. For the seas tumbling over the bows, and athwart the beam, flood along the decks feet deep, and striking the break of the poop as the vessel lifts forward, are piled up several feet higher! And this little watery lot swings into and often fills the half-deck! Also anybody in it at the time.

Having moved, I settled down. Said I: "The depth and progress of my mathematical instructions to the Old Man's son must be commensurate with the length of the voyage. This I felt to be imperative, for once he was finished, so, too, was I!

"If," I told myself, "the boy learns too quickly, I shall be left on the little end of nothing."

With this cryptic thought well reflected on the screen of my mind I turned over and wooed sleep. Sleep, nevertheless, took some time in greeting me, for, apart from the heat, numerous cosmopolitan and athletic insects, out for the evening, explored me unhesitatingly from end to end and—"kept me going."

I must rid myself of them. . . .

Forming my warm flannel shirt into a long thick pad I spread it temptingly upon my chest. Into this ultra-warm corner and trap every sprightly creeping thing about the bunk crept.

I then threw the lot out on deck and—slept.

In what seemed five minutes, I was awakened with

the watchman's: "Show the deck yer toes, Cocky!"

I did—6 a.m.

It was a beautiful morning. The sea all calm, and the sky all blue.

A few buckets of sea water dashed viciously at my body by Ben completed my first toilet. Trousers and boots followed next. I then dangled, and dipped, and dragged my insect-ranch at the end of a length of manila in the sea alongside. Eviction complete, and roomy watery graves found for all, I dried the garment and then put it on.

Whilst performing these matutinal observances the crew were busy heaving the anchors. Old Man Smith in high fortissimo leading the others in "Sally Brown":

"O Sally Brown, she's a bright mulatta—
Way-ay, roll and go!

O she drinks rum, and chews tobacco—
O Sally Brown, we loves yo so!"

The second chorus was sung low down in the vocal register by a very deep-throated and decent-mannered A.B., hailing from Baltimore, and who, catching sight of me at this moment, beckoned me to him. I went.

To the inspiring strains of "Duck-Foot-Sue," we took in our other bow anchor. All seemed to try their vocal consequences upon this song. The wonderful chorus comprised such far-flung word ingredients as English, Scottish, American, Kanakan, Portuguese, Swedish, Maori, and other languages which I now forget.

Gee! it was great!—rhythmic withal. But no respectable anchor could stand it and remain hidden. Ours came up to hear it almost at once. The bosun assured us that when Davy Jones heard Ben's voice he doubtless thought it belonged to somebody much further

down beneath him and—let go our anchor perforce. Perhaps, Ben's singing voice was best when silent.

Whilst the anchor was being catted, the A.B. who had beckoned me drew me aside hurriedly, and abruptly shot into my ear: "Drop into the fo'c'sle!"

I had no time to ask questions, for he was at once busy with the others fishing the anchor on the bill-board. Moreover, there was something in his voice—something mysterious; something imperative—that impelled me to obey.

I dropped down the break of the fo'c'sle and entered. In the half-light of the fo'c'sle I saw a figure hanging. Approaching, I noticed the head fell forward to and fro on the chest abjectly. Strange to say, even the chest itself seemed to bend forward as if broken. The toes scarcely touched the floor. . . . "Death?"

I stepped nearer . . . my God! . . . Life!

Although it is now a quarter of a century ago since these things were, yet the horror, the cruelty, the utter barbarism of it clings abidingly to me as though it were but yesterday.

Dangling, and slowly swaying towards me with extended thumbs triced up to two clew-hooks in the iron plating under the fo'c'sle-head, and with tipped toes straining vainly to reach the floor to relieve the weight of the body, was one of our crew!

My flesh suddenly grew cold. Momentarily I sickened and fell back.

I recognised that man at once—an oldish man, Norwegian; apparently somewhat delicate in health, quite kindly by nature, and rather meagre and frail in body. He had been shanghaied. His chief difficulties had been sea-sickness and a total ignorance of the English language. We called him Senn. He had more than likely been some poor, ignorant emigrant newly arrived in America to try his luck, and had perhaps been offered

work by that arch-scoundrel Calico Jim—the polylinguist master-crimp of San Francisco, and—shanghaied.

And there, in the sombre light, he was swaying. Under his bent head his blood-stained lips moved in torture. From the drooped corners of his distorted mouth blood oozed unheeded. And from his filmy eyes great tears were trickling down his pale, wan cheeks into his beard.

Horror-bound and misery-ridden, I stared. "What can I do for him and yet escape the same fate myself!" I pondered and propounded to myself.

Some dunnage lay about the deck and this suggested an idea.

Accidentally I kicked one suitable piece towards the hanging figure, and darted out to ascertain whether the mate was about. I discovered that he lay aft on the poop attending to something over the taff-rail.

In I stole again, and by kicking that same piece of wood manoeuvred it under the feet of poor Senn.

The expression from his eyes has ever been my best reward.

I then rapidly disappeared aft to escape further risk of detection, and to attend to the trimming of my lamps.

Whilst filling them with oil Ben suddenly sprang in upon me.

"Hi! this ship is Hell!"

"I know. . . . Who did it?"

He leaned over: "The chief mate," he hissed.

"I thought so. . . . Always know the bird by the egg it lays. . . . Why?"

He drew near and lowered his voice. He spoke rapidly—

"Why, it seems Senn was trying to make his getaway by the last hog-eye (barge). . . . Mate caught him. . . . Hit him across the chest with a belaying-pin snatched from the fiddle. . . . Some of the crew say Senn's breast-bone

is broken in ! . . . My God ! . . . He then in his hellish nature strung him up in the fo'c'sle . . . thumbs ! . . ."

And Ben conveyed physically the idea ; for neither he nor anyone else (except the A.B. from Baltimore) was aware of the fact that I had already seen everything.

"Hi ! I'd like to give that man a 'clout' under the jaw !" continued Ben. "Just one. . . . Willing to fight him now fer ten cents ! . . . Yes, and he can wear his knuckle-dusters, too ! . . . Only want decent deck space. . . . His own dog wouldn't know him in five minutes."

I believed it, for Ben could fight both scientifically and well. I had seen him in the ring.

"There is hell among the men. . . . The British and the Yanks say——"

A footstep which sounded like the Old Man's was approaching, and seeing that none of the crew is permitted to enter the half-deck, Ben, after a sharp and preliminary peep, sprang outside.

Subsequently I heard that the British and Americans were on the point of mutiny !

This speech of Ben's, blurted out with a new staccato hesitancy, was the longest of any kind I had ever heard from him. It was masterly—for him.

Grasping and mentally churning over the full facts as I worked, I fell to practical thinking. Could wits, such as I thought I possessed, out-manoeuvre ghastly brutality combined with excessively potent low cunning ? I decided to try them.

Evidently my first moral duty lay in trying to relieve as soon as possible the agony of poor Senn. But how ? The other officers of the ship, second and third mates, could not be expected to interfere with the actions—brutal though they may be—of their superior officers. Only one on board could do so successfully—the Old Man. And some Old Men are as brutal as their first mates !

I ruminated, and ruminated for some time. At last it came—God-sent. The Old Man loved his son . . . apple of his eye . . . adored him. . . . H'm . . . yes !

"Sonny, is that you?" I asked, as I tapped at the cabin door.

He opened it.

"I'll give you a fine new kind of lesson in mathematics to-day, Sonny. It is just time right now, before any haze springs up. Might not get another chance to do it for weeks and weeks!"

He looked askance.

"We'll do some practical trigonometry. I'll show you how to obtain the exact height, to a decimal point, of the forem'st—from truck to deck. Fancy the little job?"

"Gee! I do. I'd jest like to be able to be the guy to do tha-at!"

"Good! You shall be. You might go to India some day, and might like to obtain the height of the Himalaya Mountains; or to Great Britain, where you might like to know the height of their Cathedral spires!"

"Gee! Come on! Let's hustle!" cried he in his enthusiasm.

"Lay hold of a sextant then, and I'll find a light sounding-line to serve us as a tape, seeing there is no steel measure on board."

Presently we marched magnificently up the deck. He, full of enthusiastic innocence; I full of craftiness and much hopeful expectancy.

Arriving at the break of the fo'c'sle, I entered and immediately turned and rushed back upon Sonny, pushing him back before he could enter.

"What's the matter?" he asked anxiously, and puzzled.

"A sight not for you, Sonny. . . . We cannot take the base measurement for our triangle. . . . Go back aft

at once to your father, and tell him you want to learn to take the height of the forem'st trigonometrically, now the atmosphere is clear and suitable, and that you cannot because of something in the fo'c'sle. That Shorty [me] won't tell you what the something is. . . . I'll wait here with the sextant."

Off he hurried back.

"Pop'll sure soon fix it," he shouted back at me as he ran.

My heart beat anxiously. The evolution of chance must decide. A decent lad withal was Sonny, and although only twelve years of age promised well.

My brain was now all "pins and needles."

In a few minutes I caught sight of the Old Man bowling along the deck with Sonny at his heels. Another moment or so, he, with a peremptory word to Sonny to stay outside, disappeared into the forecastle. . . .

Gravely he in two minutes emerged. In his hand a sailor's sheath-knife.

"I did not know," he said quietly. I believed him. "Go aft to the cabin at once with Sonny." And *this* latter sentence he uttered in the gentlest tones I had ever heard from him.

We turned and strode aft. I had succeeded! The degrading spectacle was no more.

CHAPTER V

MUTINY ?

I felt, rather than saw, the crew gazing down at us from aloft, and from the fo'c'sle head. Two first-year apprentices also stopped work aloft, and stared down upon us from the main crosstrees. But we swung along the deck unheeding.

Yet I must be careful and shrewd, as may be, to avoid betraying myself during the next hour or two. . . . That mate frightened me.

"Sonny, we'll do the job in the noon watch after I have filled and trimmed the binnacle lamps," said I, as we entered the cabin.

"Right, I'll come right in to the half-deck," he returned.

In half an hour the Old Man entered.

"All clear now, Shorty—beat it!" (He had recovered.) Sonny and I "beat it"!

"Say," cried he, calling me back, "keep you and Sonny to the port bunks in the fo'c'sle. "

"Aye, aye, sir." (I understood.)

Whatever passed between him and the mate I never knew. True it is that I caught the mate ever and anon regarding me through his little close-set beady black eyes, with a certain puzzled expression as if he half-guessed at certain truths. And I regarded him (then, as now) as a callous monster—a murderer.

I took every care, however, to avoid giving him offence. Although he had little or nothing to do with me

just now I always saw him in the form of a coiled serpent, ever ready and anxious to spring at me—or anyone.

I see him now as I write—his huge, mis-shapen head on a block neck ; his deep, hairy chest, growing from which were inhumanly long arms, like tentacles. Probably he was more ape than man.

Now, as I came up the companion, I noticed his great loose mouth, with dirty rows of tobacco-stained teeth behind, slavering down curses on a whitlow which the Old Man beside him was proposing to lance. For one of the chief and irresistible foibles of the old sea-dog lay in the practice of surgery !

All masters at sea must possess some knowledge of both medicine and surgery, also bone setting. The Old Man revelled in it ! Nobody was safe !

I felt inwardly much perturbed next day to see our Old Man with small medicine chest and case under arm making his way towards the fo'c'sle.

I followed "casually," imbued with the desire of ascertaining, if possible, the condition of poor Senn, that unbefriended nursling of circumstance.

But as I passed the deck-house (Ben always dubbed this maritime structure the "frame-shack,") in which the idlers live and work, the Old Man suddenly turned round and dispatched me to help to set the "Johnny Green." I think he wanted me out of the way.

This triangular sail, rarely set or bent except in zephyr weather, when the breeze is "on the water," is flown under the bowsprit and jib-boom. It possesses little drawing power comparatively, but helps to make the ship's head more sensitive. Sailors often dub it a "kite."

Already Ben and Old Man Smith were busily at work bending it.

At the moment of making my precarious way along the top of the bowsprit, hanging on by the forestay and

jibstays, I noticed the melancholy Ben underneath me on the bobstay, patting very tenderly the cheeks of our figure-head ! Fact !

Our figure-head suggested (woodenly) a neat, but somewhat rotound lady, perhaps a goddess, painted snow white, with strangely staring blue eyes : eyes which for ever looked for a mysterious something which seemingly ever lay beyond the horizon—like those of a peasant girl newly in love.

"She's jest like this !" cried Ben pensively, still patting the cheeks of the figure-head, and looking up with a lambent flame of love in his eye.

"I hope not !" I returned.

"Well, she sure ain't deaf, wooden, nor sob-eyed," he threw back reflectively. "But she's solid and steadfast. And her cheeks—— O boy ! Jest round like these—Newtown Pippins !"

"But her nose is not like that of our figure-head, Ben, I hope ; for it has disappeared."

"No ; my little gal has jest the daintiest bit of putty on her face tha-at was ever given out—sure !"

"Well, all I 'opes," splashed Old Man Smith, breaking in, "if yer ever invite her to yer weddin' as a blushing bride she won't carry as much sail about her as this young woman !"

And he jerked his tar-covered thumb at our figure-head.

I looked at Ben askance. Ben looked at Old Man Smith.

And then the old shellback regaled us intermittently, whilst carrying a gasket or two in his mouth, and a twinkle or two in his eye, with sundry matrimonial adventures pertaining to himself.

At some facts we swallowed and blinked. We learned, for example, that the old evergreen had been married three and a half-times !

In his last matrimonial trial he had espoused and married "some" lady possessed of some means, with two fine moles, and two very fine wooden legs ! The originals were mislaid somewhere under a careless train in Nevada. So we understood.

"*She* never gits up to poke the stove fire in our old shack 'way back in San Diego, not she ! *She* jest sits still and comfortable and rakes the bars with one, or both, of her wooden legs. Handiest female I ever knewd !"

And he stared into the sea reflectively.

Thus yarning, the work of pulling and hauling and reeving proceeded merrily.

At length, about four bells in the dog-watch (6 p.m.), we finished bending the "Johnny Green." And Ben, clambering up the bowsprit, gave one last lingering look at the arresting face of our figure-head.

I gazed at him for a fleeting moment. Love must be that glorious substance of which is made the soul's salvation : its depth too deep for me to plumb ; and its wisdom too high for me to reach.

Yes, it is a long time ago : but I still recall that deep unfathomable expression of sublimity ; that ecstatic flame that sometimes wells up from the soul and sets its elysian reflection upon the face.

Crossing the fo'c'sle-head we reached the deck and took a spell upon the after-hatch. Ben's watch was over ; and so also my day's work.

We had sat but a moment when Slush (the negro cook)—a lazy, somewhat dirty, often obscene, and always impertinent fellow—approached, and thumped himself down beside us.

This black fellow felt no liking for Ben ; for Ben had once complained, perhaps rather pointedly, of the uncleanly way the negro had cooked our morning hash (breakfast). Moreover, that negro cook considered him-

self several yards above 'white-trash' sailors, and his culinary operations and products amply satisfactory and sufficient in all respects for the 'fo'c'sle herd.' In this he was materially and morally backed up by that kicking mate.

As we sat, I presently found Ben pensively absorbed "Sydney way," a condition induced probably by our recent close association with our figure-head.

"Ben," I said casually and quietly, "Sydney, Australia, is coming our way every hour. Wind abaft the beam. All the sails are drawing. What a meeting it will be when she sees her Ben! So unexpected, too! You will be very happy with your girl in Sydney!"

Now, needless to say, I intended such a casual personal remark for the ear of Ben alone; but somehow the negro cook caught it. What possessed him to "put in his oar" I do not know; but he did.

"The gals ob Sydney don't want white-trash sailor," he rudely observed. "If I see 'er ashore wid yoo, I tell 'er yoo no good! She den at once choose dis strong coloured ge'l'man from ol' Alabam!"

I saw the blood mount rapidly from Ben's neck to his face and then recede slowly, leaving his cheeks the colour of ashes. A saw the flash—an unholy flash—in Ben's eyes. I tried—too late!

With one hissing cry of "Up! Up! You black ape! I'll make you take it all back, by —— I will!" And he pushed the black heap of malice violently off the hatch.

Men at once stopped work and foregathered. The negro bully flung himself in like a grizzly at poor Ben; his giant arms revolving as though a whirlwind. The next moment he was holus bolus in the scuppers, wondering whether we kept a horse aboard.

Staggering up astounded, he thundered in again, and as suddenly went down again to lick the deck. He now bled terribly.

By this time both starboard and port-watches stood around the furious pair, issuing all kinds of Philistine remarks, and showering over them much pugilistic advice.

Once again, but more slowly now, the "ge'l'man from ol' Alabam" got up. Then, realising the situation, he tore suddenly in with his black massive arms, devoid of all fistic science.

This thunderous onslaught Ben neatly sidestepped, and with one lightning blow to the "point" stretched the black mass out on deck senseless!

And, in the words of Bret Harte, "the subsequent proceedings interested him no more."

"That will make a reet good lad on 'im," cried a Northern Britisher, breaking the momentary silence. "Perhaps after this the cook will put more onions into our breakfast 'ash 'cordin' to the skipper's orders. Nowt like a clout to drive sense into some men."

Now, whether that kicking mate overheard the latter remarks from some obscure corner, and bitterly resented the turn of events and the open reference to the ship's food, it would not be safe to say; but I do know he suddenly pounced into the middle of us.

He planted himself suddenly and menacingly before the quiet unassuming Ben.

"Food, eh! You white-livered land-lubber, son of a ——! I'll make food of yoo for the pigs—take that!"

And he struck a violent blow which Ben, expecting something of the sort, "back-stepped," and the blow landed with spent force on Ben's neck.

Then dear old Ben saw red. His five feet nine and a half inches of manhood quivered with excitement.

With a right upper-cut—as neat a one as ever I saw in the prize-ring (the Britishers called it "pretty")—he caught the mate under the jaw and sent him sprawling into the scuppers. . . . Gee!

The mate had received the surprise of his life and

was meeting it. It staggered him. How dare a hand retaliate! He would kick him to mincemeat.

And up the brutal colossus came with eyes blood-shot, appearing to my vision much like some fabulous crab on end. In he dashed, simultaneously sweeping his right hand for something in his hip-pocket!

"My God!—firearms!" I thought. So, I think, did Ben, for in he darted like lightning, hitting right and left terrific blows that gave the murderous fiend no time to draw.

Whatever hid in that back pocket could not be withdrawn. It seemed to be stuck. His hand flew there once or twice, only to be unsuccessful and to receive hellish punishment upon his face. It stung him into ungovernable ferocity. He then slipped his great hand into his front trousers pocket. It came out with a knuckle-duster upon the fingers!

"You coward!" hissed justified Ben. "But come on! You Nova Scotian reptile—come on! My God, if I don't give you the licking you've been wanting for years. You'll lick this deck for once—ah! would you! kick, eh!"

And whilst these two sparred for deadly openings, I removed some potatoes that were airing upon the hatch, and which stood in danger of rolling off and under the feet of the combatants. Ben must have every possible chance.

I also removed surreptitiously from the fiddle and fife rails, with the covert aid of the sailor from Baltimore, all the handy belaying-pins. I knew that kicking mate.

And there was the trained Ben skipping about the deck in the full prime and pride of his twenty-six years. And the great badger-like mate trying his utmost to draw near to him in order to strike this devilish fellow dead with a knuckle-duster, or to kick him prostrate with his sea-boot.

But Ben was never there at the moment ! But the mate was there, and the next second knew it. Ben was a tartar. One of the Britishers called him a "Bobby-dazzler," whatever that might mean.

Fortunately, the ship was not rolling the slightest ; else Ben would have been at a further disadvantage. Her decks, too, were spacious, unencumbered, and at this moment as white as a hound's tooth, except for the splashes and drops of blood shed by the negro, to which this other imp of hell was copiously adding.

My shanghaied friend, I noticed, looked quite cool in face, a deadly kind of coolness though. I had never before seen him look as he looked now.

Perhaps the desire to kill presented itself ; perhaps the jungle animal instinct, latent in us all, to fight and tear asunder, rose and proclaimed itself ; perhaps. . . that dear little girl in Sydney whispered in his ear that he must come to her ! Whatever the motive and incentive power may have been, Ben was all there, trained to an ounce, and as active and as watchful as a panther.

He side-stepped, like an expert dancer, the most studied and murderous onslaughts. I often marvelled how he escaped. Good and well had my friend been trained in that difficult art of side-stepping by that great master of the art, Jim Corbett of San Francisco.

And here he stood now against the greatest knuckle-dustered bully I have ever known.

And certainly that Nova Scotia bully was "getting it." Notwithstanding poor Ben bled freely, too, from the side of his head, because of a knuckle-duster scratch he had received. The knuckle-duster I found subsequently was a knobbed one, with one knob cone-spiked : a hideous, deadly thing.

The crew noticed it, or knew of it, for they shouted the information to Ben. But no longer did they shout

advice. They had now learned that they watched the prowess of a master, a master further hardened with pure sea air, and hard sea work.

How my pal punished ! Goodness, it was worth a farm to see and hear those cracks and whacks. And the foreign seamen aboard looked on in wonderment. Poor, cringing creatures ! But in their hearts how they must have rejoiced. Could poor old Senn but have seen ! Could that sailor in San Francisco but have known !

Finally, all around rejoiced to see that Ben was fast coming out at the big end of the trumpet. Armoured frenzied hands were of no avail against science.

The finishing touches comprised a quick but vicious short-arm punch on the solar plexus. This doubled the tyrant up ; but an ardent undercut straightened him up again, followed by a straight to the nose—which organ was already split flat. The eyes now received some attention, especially one, and Ben, striking it good and hard, slipped back out of range of the whirling knuckle-duster with that uncanny ease born of the ring.

Then in again—smash ! smash ! And here the utterly infuriated bully tugged hard at a plated knob in that hip pocket !

We gasped ! But catching in the lining of the pocket it failed to come out. (Thank God !) He then threw one swift and furtive glance at the fife-rail and fiddle to seek a belaying-pin—all gone !

Then he went to pieces.

"Come on, Mr. Kicking Blue Nose !" cried Ben exasperatingly. "I could hev polished you off nicely ten minutes ago ; but you would not hev looked so pretty, eh ? . . . The little lot you hev had is from Senn, the man you hev murdered—you damn thug ! . . . Ah ! would you use those dainty little feet of yours then . . . jest as you did before on the fo'c'sle head ? . . . jest a quiet one to pay off that score." . . . (And Ben handed it out to him.)

And the baffled beast could do no more than curse and blaspheme horribly in his frenzied impotency.

Ben could do, and did, just what he liked with him—just as I had seen at the bull-fight in Mexico City the matadores taunt the maddened bull with irritating darts, before giving him the *coup de grâce*. (Although then my pity and respect were marshalled on the side of the bull.)

Ben now threw at him, intermittently, some good home truths, coupled with both his own and the crew's opinion of his pitchy character. These exasperating facts he quaintly interlarded with a tip-tap here, and a tip-tap there until the brute was beside himself with rage, foaming at the mouth.

And then Ben, pulling himself together as it were, to make an end, swept in like a cyclone. The blows were terrible. I can both see and hear them to this day. A full pugilistic-ring onslaught. And as the ogre squinted through the only eye-slit that remained in business, Ben sent in to the "point"—smash!

And the ruffian went down like an ox, and rolled beside the negro—Senn was justly avenged.

That part of the crew composed of Anglo-Saxons understood. They raised a great good cheer!—the loudest perhaps, certainly the heartiest, ever heard aboard a merchant deep-sea waterman. In this part of the fight I excelled.

And chancing to look up to the poop I saw the Old Man and Sonny looking on!

How much had they seen? What might happen now? I went towards them.

In truth, I feared sadly for Ben. Yet the Old Man was half British . . . a sport? I hoped so! A surgeon? I doubted! Yet these two fresh cases might prove a god-send to his temper, and therefore to Ben.

That night in my bunk I overheard from two of the youngest dare-devil apprentices, gloating heartily over the

late proceedings, that the mate had remained unconscious for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and that someone (they, I think) had dragged him when night fell—for in those latitudes there is no twilight—into the pig's trough !

The brute had been left there to recover in the slime, and to be roused by Mrs. Cape Horn and family.

Also they had wrenched off his knuckle-duster and had removed his loaded six-chambered gun. These they had adroitly placed (as trophies?) under the blankets in Ben's bunk. Ben found them.

But I have never given the two young rascals away until now—twenty years odd afterwards. Good luck to them !

For many days now the deck saw nothing of the first mate.

I recall, quite well, a few days after the great bout, asking the steward who waited upon him, and whom we called Twinkle, because he possessed but one eye, how the fallen Nero fared.

"Damifino ! " he returned. "The front of his ideapot looks ez if a herd of mules had galloped over it ! Gee ! his mother must hev bin fond of children to hev raised such a varmint ! If my frau 'way back in Cambridge Mass, had any intention of ever raising one like thet I would grease the home-stairs. Yes, sir ! right away ! "

"But how is the 'varmint,' anyhow ? "

"Why, skipper sez he's two or three ribs smashed in—due, I guess, to his falling heavyish at the finish of the fight on to the corner of the hatchway coaming. Also (and here he drew nearer to me) I sure think he ain't any good for the sea no more ! "

"Great^rScott ! W-why ? "

"One of the Battling-Ben's last upper-cuts caught him with his tongue between his teeth—and the end of his tongue is vanished ! "

No more blasphemy, I thought. The world is well rid of *that*.

And so it proved to be. I learned subsequently from the Old Man, during one of his rare complaisant moments, that the mate had been "short-snubbed," and that he had found much difficulty in "repairing" and "caulking" him; that the mate had refused to come to "wind'ard" of No. 13 or No. 8 (medicines), although a spot or two of syrup of squills had been added to "tow" it down; that his face was still "all aback," and that it had been well plastered with Stockholm tar, and all bruises and bulges well oiled. "Nothing like No. 8 for above the belt; and nothing like No. 13 below. No. 13 flushes the lower decks so good and well," he concluded.

(I wonder what happened when the malady exercised itself exactly on the waist-line.)

And thus the mate remained.

CHAPTER VI

JEHOSHAPHAT RATTLES

Strange to say, as he related these facts to me, the Old Man seemed more pleased than chagrined at the loss of the mate. Probably due to some kink in character, or the delight felt in thus being able to practise properly, and with ample excuse, what he termed his "second profession." (He should have dubbed it his "Second Obsession.") He loved feeling and pressing bones—other people's.

In the corner of his cabin stood a complete human skeleton. All the bones were copper-wired. It was a most expensive skeleton; in parts most illuminating. Every bone was labelled in most approved scientific fashion by me—under direction: every bone dusted and washed by me—under compulsion.

Upon its shiny head, the Old Man's gold-braided peaked cap was waggishly tilted: between its grinning teeth a fat Cuban cigar!

He called it Jehoshaphat. But the skeleton was that of a Mexican.

When the ship rolled or pitched, Jehoshaphat's bones rattled and swayed; and Sonny and I would glance up from our books with an uncomfortable eerie feeling—especially at night, when it seemed alive.

But we dare not cover up the gleaming thing—insult to science!

Once I had the temerity, as the Old Man stood over me whilst I meticulously dusted Jehoshaphat, to ask him how he really knew the skeleton *was* really that of a Mexican.

"Why, first," answered he, "because his bones were very dirty, a habit doubtless acquired in his life time; secondly, I found him with a lemon in his hand; and thirdly, there was a streak of yellow tuber twined about his spine!"

I knew that all Mexicans are supposed to have a yellow streak in them; but I had no idea, until then, that the streak was so material.

And that is all I ever learned of the origin of that skeleton.

Queer man! I suppose he never thought that from behind his own face his own skull was ever grinning at him.

And so this temperamental ship's master doctored his sick luxuriantly and energetically with Dutch-drops and squills; whilst he deliberately but scientifically half-starved those who were well with weevil biscuits and skilly.

The negro, for instance, probably frightened by the skipper's attentions and intentions, recovered immediately; the mate would recover; but poor Senn seemed far beyond the Old Man's medical skill.

"He's coiled his last rope, I guess," whispered the sailor from Baltimore. "He'll heave anchor soon."

I nodded.

There is neither mawkish sentiment nor room for the lachrymose indulgent on board a ship. Whatever is felt is never portrayed demonstratively. Sometimes some of the hands would approach Senn's bunk, look for a moment at his tired, film-covered eyes, and wasted frame, nod their heads (perhaps) and pass out.

It is the way of the sea.

To the watch it means a man short—more work on the others. To the ordinary captain—hindrance; no more.

I bent my energies to writing surreptitiously upon

sundry bits of cribbed paper, which I hid, the details of Senn's case: exact times, dates, witnesses; and all other material points, which struck me as of legal value.

Nevertheless, as regards the value of my witnesses, I somewhat despaired, for I learned from Old Man Smith, who shared my secret desire, that once ashore, the voyage over, Mercantile Jack becomes afflicted with a lamentable aberration—he forgets the gross injustices so patiently suffered; the blasphemous insults so stoically borne; and the wanton infringement of ship's articles so ignorantly tolerated.

Yes, he forgets and neglects.

Still, despite this formidable handicap I intended to try. Should Senn die before we fetched (reached) Iquique, that ultra-callous scoundrel could be handed over as a murderer to the Chilean authorities to receive justice—such as it is in Chile.

I could somehow or other, I thought, report the matter to either the American Consul, or the American Ambassador at Santiago. But the Great Ruler of all things took the ugly affair out of my hands—suddenly.

A conference had been held in the forecabin, and it had been decided that the ship could be excellently worked without the use of cone knuckle-dusters, and flying belaying-pins. Now, when an order went forth, men sprang to execute it with commendable alacrity. Every officer noticed it. The Old Man particularly. A few more onions of good reputation travelled into our morning hash; and a portly sea-pie—sometimes a “three-decker”—found its way into the fore cabin. Our “blind-alley” too came to us without having seen a ghost on the way.

At last we felt ourselves to be a happy ship.

So happy that the “spare parts” (apprentices) formed a Foofoo-band. A keg with the ends knocked out, and stout stretched canvas substituted—the drum! A skilful tin or skid with two large spoons—the kettle

drum ! A mouth organ ; a patched incomprehensible concertina ; a formidable overwhelming voice pertaining to the archangel (our youngest apprentice). Also another instrument, the eldest apprentice—who played the comb very eloquently.

The ship's band, who proclaimed that nothing on earth existed like it—which eulogy was generally accepted as true *de facto*—used, when permission, had been granted, to descend the companion and foregather around the cabin-door.

The Old Man would be yellow-curtained off in his bunk, apparently asleep. Sonny and I would be perhaps wrestling with *a*¹ and *b*¹.

Presently a crash and rattle of heavy turbulent spoons on weak tin. . . . Then the fearsome rest altogether, Jehu General Jackson ! What thunder !

Even the bones of Jehoshaphat rattled. Perhaps in life he had been musical. Doubtless now he felt sorely tried. I was.

At length a meek and modest tap-tap at the door—no answer. (*We* dared not open it.)

"The old devil is asleep !" (This in a very hush-hush voice.)

"Guess the old nickle-nurser is playing hee-fee-fi-fo-fum himself on his bone harp (the skeleton's ribs !) Let's give him another musical item. Might fetch him from 'tween his golden gates (the yellow curtains of his bunk). Now then !" . . .

The volcanic eruption over—no answer !

"The old Airdale [the skipper wore a stubble beard] must be for'ard, and not in !"

"No, he *is* in, I can sniff right now his rotten greaser [Mexican] tobacco. . . . Another tune, boys. Give him his favourite—'Marching through Georgia.' All ready ?"

Bang ! . . . I never heard such a row. Nobody ever

did. But it must have been a grand march, for it proved successful !

The Old Man sprang up, dashed from "'tween his golden gates," and having stormed for the elusive Twinkle, ordered him to : " Give those fine lads of mine a can of sardines—small can, mind ! Small can—damn it ! "

(One small tin of sardines to be shared among five or six hefty, growing, half-starved healthy lads !)

But this piscatorial recompense for their musical prowess proved very welcome. They even drank the oil to the last drop, much to the chagrin of our new second mate, who wanted it to put on his head !—to make his hair grow. (He 'sported' just a little "farewell-in-the-desert.")

There is one thing I still remember vividly relative to the consumption of that particular box of sardines, and that is : immediately upon the swift despatch of the contents, the celebrated Foofoo band felt the pangs of thirst (the far-seeing Old Man's notion of a joke). They begged most ardently and most mordantly, I fear, of the second mate to grant them an extra drink of water.

But he proved inexorable. Adamant.

They cursed and said no more music in the tropics. Foofoo and sardines don't agree. Fortunately.

On the 23rd day out, whilst standing somewhere off the north-west coast of Peru—Cape Parina I think—it rained. Glorious cool rain. We filled our water-tanks, and scuttle-butt ; we drank our fill. And then we spread a large sail in dish form to catch the rain.

Having caught sufficient we began washing our clothes. Most of the men were dressed in the unobtrusive costume of Adam. I stood eighth down the list (even in those days there were queues !) The last of the crew on the list must have found the water muddy ; for it looked black and felt silty when even my turn came. Some men plugged up the scuppers on the lee side, and thus secured

a pond in which they washed their belongings. A great relief to us washing in the "dish."

This general wash in soft water proved to be the last for many a long day. And on this noted day I shaved. The third mate lent me his razor, and two rubs on his priceless spot of soap.

Some of the crew shaved too, including the Battling Ben, who had begun to look quite prehistoric. Indeed it was said by some that his face began to resemble a chimpanzee peering through a spool of wool!

And Ben now no longer performed the negro-auntie chores (small jobs) of the forecastle, which had erstwhile been imposed upon him by several older hands, who had taken advantage of his maritime ignorance, and curious illusory melancholy, for quenched fires.

Neither did Slush prove vindictive. Rarely, indeed, is the full-blooded negro so. It is the pernicious intermixture of black and white, the mulatto, that is wont to be responsible for the engendering and harbouring of vindictiveness. Still more important the Old Man, so far, had neither said nor done anything punitive towards Ben.

Indeed, after unfurling his heavy eyebrows, he had most carefully set, and as carefully, bound up, the Battling Ben's thumb, which had been dislocated when meting outtothekicking mate that last technical thump.

Notwithstanding this, the operation over, heavy eyebrows furled again, I had overheard him order Ben "for'ard," with a frigid unexampled peremptoriness.

Ben had looked as if boiled to a turn.

But that night I had deftly consoled him by silently passing out through the poop-lights a well-mixed handful of cake and pickled onions.

Often in the last moments of his second dog-watches, I managed, weather permitting, to bring my predatory operations to a successful and happy issue.

Ben's heavy clutching hand never missed. It rose from the dark ; it clutched ; it disappeared.

Like the rest of us, he was always hungry. Once I " managed " a lost and very old bottle of Californian wine ! . . .

The watch often referred to that lost bottle as " Clementina," ; because it had been " a forty-niner " and " gone for ever."

CHAPTER VII

DEAD 'ORSE

We had sunk Mazatlan over the stern two weeks ago—all told, a month at sea. The dying airs of a profitable slant of wind wafts us, at a leisurely two knots, towards the world's waist-band.

From early morn work had claimed us in the general overhaul of running gear, in readiness for the ever-shifting cats-paws and breezes of the Doldrums.

Our evening meal over, we, the watch below, squatted and sprawled under the cool draught of the bulging fore-sail. I remember, as I sat, I watched silently but deeply, the wondrous dying sun cut by the horizon of a satined sea. One learns perforce at sea that Beauty is not a quality: that it is a feeling. Beauty hushes the agitating soul, and stills the flippant tongue.

In the midst of my reverie and reverence a strong rich voice broke in upon me. I turned. Seated on the mooring-bits, speaking to all who cared to listen, I found the sailor from Baltimore saying—

“Thirty days out come Friday . . . Dead Horse!”

And he cut determinedly a deep notch into a stout long lath that lay across his knee—the crew's calendar or log; unassailable, and often uncanny in its accuracy. (Even pounds of tobacco, oil-skins, soap, sea-boots, and many other slop-chest sundries obtained from the Skipper have each their own peculiar mark placed opposite the particular notch representing the day of the month obtained. For accuracy I had rather trust a sailor's 'yard stick' than a pawnbroker's books.)

And thus engaged is Baltimore, singing over his task snatches of a mysterious melodious chanty in which "heave," "dead horse," "old horse," "out" seem to occur frequently.

"What is 'dead horse,' anyway?" asked the puzzled Ben of the master of the yard-stick log.

"Why, dead 'orse is the first month out when ye're working to pay off yer debt with yer boarding-house master—the crimps. 'E boards yew for twenty cents a day, and charges yew one dollar. 'E draws yew first month's wages from the shippin' agents the very day your ship sails with yew on board.

"And if yew fail to ship he gits nothing; and yew something if he meets yew. But, havin' shipped, yew hev to work his bill off first before yew begin to earn any pay for yourself—savez? . . . On Friday the first month is up!—'Heave the old horse out!'" he concluded singing lustily.

Ben and I now understood; and also fell to the fact that through our misfortunes with Calico Jim—that dope-dosing scoundrel, of San Francisco—we should be obliged to work 'dead horse' for two months! And did.

And then we listened to Baltimore; again busy as he sang with his notch-cutting—

"But now the month is up, ol' Turk,
(An' we say so, an' we 'opes so),
Get up, ye 'orse, an' look fur work,
(Oh! Poor-ol'-horse!)"

And at the last words Baltimore cut a notch wide and deep—for next Friday. Then—

"Get up, ye moke, an' look fur graft,
(An' we says so, an' we 'opes so),
While we lays on, an' yanks ye aft,
(Oh! Poor-dead-horse!)"

With this he rose with his "log," and as he disappeared into the forecastle, we heard the last trailing notes: "Heave the old horse out!"

During Thursday we noticed mysterious preparations. We noticed barrel-hoops torn from casks reshaped into ellipses; pieces of dunnage, lengths of bamboo, loose yarn, and some canvas all neatly placed in a heap inside the forecastle.

During the various watches, these marine, or junk-store, goods were slowly, but cleverly, fashioned by Chips and Sails into the crude resemblance of the skeleton of a horse. Supposed to be a modern horse.

But I feel sure no modern respectable horse would own to it, even were it that of a dear, departed ancestor. Certainly Mrs. Norton, the poetess, never had this equine frame in mind when she penned: "My beautiful! My beautiful!"

Erected in the forecastle athwartships, it faced 'both sides of the house' so to speak. Its tail-end facing the starboard bunks caused many sanguinary remarks to be flung both at it and at Chips. But as Chips apologetically remarked: "The darned 'orse hez only one 'ead, no matter which way yew try to fix it."

Old Man Smith sitting contentedly on the bitts of the bowsprit patiently threading a model of our ship down the neck of an empty beer bottle, offered no comment. No horsey man was Smith.

I recall catching Chips very busily engaged in fashioning some rough legs for it.

"Busy, Chips?"

"Busy, Sho-rtly? Busy? Why, I am thet goldarn busy, I—I'm as busy as a one-arm paperhanger with an itchy armpit—where's the Old Man?"

I reassured him.

Not to disturb him further I retired. Passing out of the doorway I encountered Slush, the negro cook, and Yank Heins pushing inside.

"Vat about 'ees tail?" Heins shot out critically, noticing that that hirsute appendage was missing.

"Why, yew jest go to Fiddlers Green and hunt grass—pushing in here like a jetty policeman after a drink in a whisky dive."

"Vere *ees* Feedlers Green, Cheeps?" further inquired Heins, taking some cumbersome delight in thinking he had cornered Chips.

"Why, yew darned old square-head, think yew hev mast-headed me, eh? Don't yew savey 'Vere eet ees'? Wall, then, it's exact nautical position is as near as dammit ten miles sou-sou-west of 'ell! It's where the folk live who put the hinges on the Dutch cockles. Clear out! Vamoos!"

And Heins cleared. (Chips is made from rough-hewn log straight-grained, but knotty.)

"Thet all-fired old Dutchman ez bin dodging in and out of 'ere all the watch like a dog around shows at a shore fair," he concluded, resuming his work and muttering to himself in language blue and corrosive: "'Vat about ees tail'—the galoot!"

Then, glancing suddenly over his shirt-covered shoulder, as heads and bodies noisily crushed through the door, he cried: "Wall, I'll be damned!"

This new lot, viewing critically the unfinished framework of the horse, rattled forth pertinent and impertinent remarks about it: "What an 'orse! Whoa! Whoa! yew ol' buckler! Two to one on the field! . . . Gentlemen, Blinko Charlie rides 'im from 'is neck to 'is tail. . . . Whoa! Whoa! Nightmare!"

This continued until Chips at last becoming so stung and exasperated, volleyed forth sulphurously: "To 'ell with everybody! Ain't it enough to hev Sails in 'ere buzzin' around, an' blowing everywheres like a blue-back fly in a gale of wind? To 'ell with everybody!" And, cursing volubly, the crochety old ship's carpenter pushed everybody out of the place.

He slammed the fo'c'sle door to show his present, but temporary prominence.

Sails, the other high priest in these rites, clothed the shaky beast with a skin of canvas ; whilst I, a humble acolyte, being supposed to possess some skill with a paint brush, became pressed into the service of furnishing nostrils, mouth and eyes.

Wild, snorting nostrils I drew and painted. They were of cardinal red, and lined dense black with Stockholm tar.

The ferocious sanguinary mouth dripping blood—first class blood, made from red-oxide paint—I fashioned from a strip of red flannel, “pinched” by our mischievous, but bliging archangel from the tail-end of Baltimore's apacious shirt, then hanging up to dry.

The eyes had a snow-white pupil the size of a shilling, composed of white-lead, in a small pond of black. And, encircling the pupils, I drew wide involute circles of red and blue ; finishing off with a nice broad-line enclosing circle of Stockholm tar. I presented it with some long enviable eyelashes—curled *à la beauté*—made from bent nails.

Altogether it was not the sort of head one might care to see on All Hallows' Eve in a dismal lane, looking upon one from over a lonely gate.

There, at last, he stood, or rather hanged—for he could not stand—a finished steed without a single horse-power.

Next day, Friday, the “doings” began. The skipper had regarded the preliminaries to the ceremony with a paternal eye ; indeed, he had given us the first dog watch to prepare, so that all hands could participate in the rite. (The men never forgot him for this.)

The kicking mate lay below perforce, nursing and cursing his smashed ribs, else probably these important proceedings might never have taken place. Never did

hatch corners and ribs agree. The second mate, with bandy legs, and Twinkle, the steward, with the ship's cat and a cough, eyed critically the noble steed through the forecastle door.

The cat mewed. Well he might. For a treat Twinkle put him on Nightmare's head! Up went the cat's tail—and, two days' later the cat was found in the lazaret nearly stiff. Queer things, cats.

Standing proudly back, amid the great jubilation and turmoil of the hands in the forecastle, to admire our fearsome handiwork, I became electrically roused by the galvanic voices of the high priests Chips and Sails bellowing—

"All hands on deck! Out yew all git, every sister's brother of yew! All out, the whole bunch of yew, 'cept the horsemen! Beat it! All out! every damned one of yew Satan's lifebelts!"

And out we had to "git."

In the meantime, there had been rigged by some of the crew a luff tackle to the lee quarter of the fore-yard, and in line with the forecastle doorway.

The necessity of employing this particular kind of tackle puzzled me at first greatly; for, a luff-tackle is sufficiently powerful to lift a few tons, and our redoubtable steed weighed but a matter of pounds! But in good time I learned that it was the heavy weight upon our hearts and consciences that the great luff-tackle was intended to lift and remove!—as symbolised in the "dead horse" before us. Dear me!

Upon the last stroke of four bells, excitement and turbulence raged afresh, but now *outside* the forecastle. Fresh from deck work, and swarming into the scene came the port-watch, desperate to know if all stood ready within.

They clamoured. They dinned.

Chips inside, hearing and grasping the meaning of

the hubbub, and the raucous demands for admittance, accompanied by frightful rappings and clanging of hand-spikes on the iron door, pokes his nose and his pointed beard very aggressively through a few inches of chink in the fo'c'sle doorway and bellows: "Wisht your damned row! This ain't a free lunch counter. Stand back! You'll jest hev to do as your mothers did—wait."

And with that he banged the door.

At length, Spunyard returned from inside the "stable," and "straight from the horse's mouth" informed us that all stood ready.

"Lay along the fall [rope] of the tackle, boys."

With that we noticed Spunyard and Chips take the lower block of the luff-tackle into the forecastle, and hitch it to the band of rope that engirthed the horse. Then, by the aid of a snatch-block, which they fixed to a deck ring-bolt, we were all enabled to tail on to the fall as it snaked aft along the deck to a belaying-pin in the fife-rail.

All the crew took hold of the long rope in eager readiness for the word "haul." Five noisy and gleeful apprentices, with Sonny at the far end, shouting "Ain't the goods ready yit?" and our healthy little archangel at the extreme, managing matters about the fife-rail around the mainmast, put the hook-and-eye on things.

At last, from inside the forecastle, flashed the electric word: "HAUL!"

And thirty-full limbed men and boys lay back on the rope. How we hauled!! But nothing happened! Perhaps we took in about an inch of slack, but no more.

We waited a moment. . . . What had caught?

"HAUL! Blast ye, haul! Yew can't haul the skin off a rice pudding!" broke over us like swells the stentorian and urging bellows of old Chips, in accents closely imitative of our English second mate.

We hauled. Some of us burst into spasmodic laughter when :

"Quit yer goldarn sniggerin' ! " This from Spunyard standing at the forecastle door. "Yew Sho-rt-y ! Quit laughin'. Keep it fur some more appropriate 'casion. This is a burial ! D'yer git me ? "

And he looked really serious. I tried to be.

Another moment and the sailor from Baltimore, having been given the fit and proper nod from Spunyard, began to chant in real good voice :

(Solo) " Now the old horse is dead "—

(Thirty hands) " He-e-e-ve him out ! " (And here we all pulled together.)

(Solo) " Now the old horse is dead and done "

(Thirty hands) " He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT ! "

At the word " OUT " we put in a last " sweat " (a giant pull.)

(Solo) " We gave him a month of our daily bread "—

(Chorus) " He-e-e-ve him OUT ! " (We gained a yard more rope).

(Solo) " We gave him a month of our bread and beef "—

(Chorus) " He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT ! "

Nightmare's head at this moment appeared in the doorway.

Gee ! His head in the daylight ! . . . Those eyes !

"Nowt soul-full in them eyes," commented English Sammy of the Starbowlines. (This A.B. in his watches below was given to devouring avidly piles of five-cent. sob-tales.)

"Look's damn sad at parting with us," ventured a hushed funereal voice somewhere up the rope. " Looks like our old rent collector 'way back home when rent

ain't ready ; . . . and his eyes like my old woman's when I fetch home from sea," he added unromantically.

In the midst of further piquant comments and praiseless ejaculations Baltimore's voice took up again the chanty :

(Solo) "He was a horse that was good and true"—

(Chorus) "He-e-e-ve him OUT!"

(Solo) "He was a horse that did his bit"—

(Chorus) "He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT!"

And with that last "OUT" we strained like giants—especially my friend Ben. But the most that happened was an inch or two of more horse prominence, and the sudden advent of thousands of beads of perspiration. Good beads. Good perspiration.

Noticing the general desperation and the little progress made, Slush exclaimed vehemently: "Massa! Ge Wilikins! De ole 'orse am surah dead!"

"Golly; he am dat! He surah gone 'tween dem golden gates; an' like 'Lijah, doant intend no ways acoming back; no, noways, surah!" concurred Tarry Tom, the mulatto of the Starbowlines.

And then, in the general impasse, rang out:

"Haul away there! Damn ye to blazes! Why don't ye haul!—Blimy, ye don't haul enough to lift a weevil out of a biscuit. Haul! Rouse her!" And old nattery Chips, proud of the privileged occasion, in which he could imitate the second mate with impunity, and authoritatively bawl, went in and banged the forecastle door.

"H-a-a-w-l! Wreck me for beer if— Now then, all ye gentlemen who develop flat thumbs through pushing press-bells in saloon smoke-rooms, Haul! H-a-u-l—ye flat-thumbed lubbers!"

This was a skit flung at landsmen shanghaied.

And Baltimore, whom I was surprised to notice, pulled very little, broke out afresh :

' He never kicked and he never shied '—
He-e-e-ve him OUT !
He ate our bread an' now he's died !
He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT ! "

At the end of this moving verse a new vocalist appeared—Tarry Tom ; a four-ace sailor, yet an excessively proud fellow. As proud as Lucifer heading a torch procession. A few odd spots of white blood dodging about in his veins comprised the cause, so it was said. Nevertheless, he possessed a particularly musical singing voice.

" O aye, me bonnies !
De poor ole 'orse he's dead an' done ;
We gave him beef an bread, an' bone—
O aye, me bonnies !
But now 'e's dead an' damned 'e goes
Ober de side, where—de debbil knows !—
O aye, me bonnies."

And as he sings the ship heaves and swings along. And as she swings, the breeze spilling out of the great distended foresail wafts indulgently its coolest best about our heated foreheads—a Persian licking its kittens.

I still hear across the drift of twenty years or more the accompanying swish of shivered waters overside, and the melodious hum and high crescendos of backstays, lifts and shrouds—deep and unlooked for obligatos to the singers.

As Tarry Tom finished, Baltimore returned to the regular chanty :

" He's dead an' damned, so let him go,
He-e-e-ve him OUT !
He's dead and damned whether he will or no,
He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT ! "

And with this "Out" the ribs of Nightmare, due to our sudden strenuous pull, became jammed in the fore-castle doorway. Chips and Sails had made the horse a little too large—purposely.

All the very old A.B's. try to look awed. It was, to judge by their faces, as though the hearse had overturned. Everyone down the rope looked on in strenuous silence.

This disconcerting impasse necessitated (in great pantomime) the high priests to prise recklessly with hand-spikes the sides of equus.

Anyone looking upon these busy two—sort of imps—might think tremendous labour was involved in giving our horse's "carcase" its freedom. But no. The two nabobs but fooled—a fooling full of whimsicalities, caperings, and outpourings that made everyone burst forth into roars of laughter.

We had wished that the *impassé* might have proved more difficult to circumvent, for, in truth, we all felt glad of the rest. Excellent perspiration poured freely from us; some of the apprentices seemed almost winded. I know I was. But apparently the old shellbacks among us seemed not only quite dry comparatively, but remarkably in breath. Strange thing.

At the time, I remember, it puzzled me. I put it down to "knack."

"But, say, bo," said Baltimore, sidling up and addressing me, confidentially, as I sat for a moment on the spare spars lying alongside the rail, "we'll git the dead 'orse out, even if the devil is laying hold of his hind legs!"

I nodded agreeably. I had some spirit left; but not much strength.

"Haul away out there," cried the omnipresent and irrepressible Chips. "What in 'ell are ye spelling fur? Haul! There's moss starting to sprout out of the 'orse's 'eels! Haul!"

And haul we did again.

I wondered why we had not long ago pulled the thing to ribbons. It puzzled me. But I had little time to consider and to ruminate upon it. One might conclude by the exertion expended that a reluctant mammoth or two were being hauled forth. Funny thing.

"One last pull, boyees!" cried Spun yarn, laying back determinedly on the rope. "Jest a last sweat! . . . He's got no friends! . . . Now then!"

And to the tuneful rhythm of Baltimore's voicing the chanty we buckled to:

"We gave him a month of our daily bread—

He-e-e-ve him OUT!

We gave him a month of the best we had—

He-e-e-ve the old horse OUT!"

And then, with a quaint little run, half dangle, half swing—OUT THE OLD HORSE CAME!

Great Scot! How limp, frail and forlorn he looked! And with what reproach and dismay his lustrous inveigling eyes gazed upon us!

And then suddenly, as we more closely examined the horse, we novices gasped! We could hardly believe our eyes! . . .

True! Our "legs" had been thoroughly "pulled!"

We at once discovered the reason why, though hauling utterly, we had failed to haul immediately the 'ole 'orse OUT.

To the hook of the lower tackle block that suspended the horse, a good counter-acting line of three-inch manila had been hitched, unknown to us, and had then been passed twice round a steel stanchion supporting the forecastle-head. Against this utterly unconquerable, yet simple, arrangement, we had pulled heroically!

At the end of this countering rope now stood Old

Man Smith, with a sheepish look of feudal simplicity—smiling! He had held on to the countering line easily; and had given us a few inches now and then, just as personal inclination served. The old wretch!

Ben and I had wondered where he had got to.

Yes, and there the old shellback stood, legs apart to the swing of the ship, his watery blue eyes in the sombre light of the forecastle twinkling and twinkling with deep merriment.

"The old guy has enjoyed putting it over on us," remarked Ben, as we, somewhat crestfallen, rejoined others.

He had.

Old Man Smith now slacked away freely.

Soon up, out, and beyond the rail (bulwarks) hung the symbol of the crew's emancipation.

As he dangled and swung to the ship's heave and gentle roll, all the old shellbacks sang lustily:

"The poor old horse is dead and damned.

He-e-e-ve him OUT!

So heave him out, and let him go—

He-e-e-ve the old horse out!

We gave him bread, and sleep, and beef,

He-e-e-ve him OUT!

But now he's dead, and done, an' damned,

He-e-e-ve him OUT!"

At this we took a last glance at his dented sides, and famined loins, and at those eyes and mouth of horror. Then Sails mounted the rail.

We watched him hold on to the after swifter with one hand, while he stretched out with the other to sever the rope yarn that secured one bight of the sling to the block-hook.

The next second the "carcase" dropped abruptly

from the sling into the white curly beards under our lee.

Another moment caught us all bending over the rail throwing overboard our sonorous and glad good-byes to the "dead horse."

Half submerged he passed astern.

Sic transit gloria equi.

CHAPTER VIII

TRACT "STUFF"

"Say, Sho-rt-y, where's the slip-knot in this darn tangle?" And the Old Man jerked my shoulder around from the poop-light just as my hand dropped its nutritious but dangerous freight into Ben's open palm, and thrust a large oblong card into my hands.

I breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Holding the card up to the gimbals of the cabin lamp, I read: "*Dieu et mon droit.*"

"Now then, Sho-rt-y, put the fall rope of it into my hands."

I explained its meaning to him.

"H'm, thought it was a goldarn text. Lazaret full of 'em. Chuck it overboard for the 'card' fish (flat fish) and go right along down into the lazaret and fetch up a block or two of 'Methody mush'; and"—turning to Mr. Sloan, our temporary chief officer—"Mr. Sloan, you will oblige me by giving the 'mush' to the archangel to rough over the brasswork on the poop-ladder to-morrow. It looks a trifle dingy."

Mr. Sloan nodded and added: "Aye, sir, it do."

"Then why in hell hev I to tell you about it!" snapped the Old Man.

Obeying the skipper, I took an anchor-light in my hand, and descended through the scuttle into the lazaret.

The lazaret, like the forepeak and chain locker, comprised a dismal rheumatic chamber beneath decks; as dark as the inside of an elephant, and probably as

damp. For notwithstanding iron ships are usually as tight as a bottle, yet in confined places, and in almost airless chambers, the iron plates "sweat"; a pernicious result which produces an atmosphere that turns a pair of leather boots green in a week! (To-day, in great part, patent cork-paint circumvents this difficulty.)

And desperate men have been confined in irons within these foul chambers! One very old Yankee skipper informed me a few years afterwards that in his day the lazaret was called the "mutineers' boudoir!"

Our lazaret, with its hatch on the poop, was situated aft, under the cabin, and contained cabin stores, canned goods of all edible kinds, barrels of split peas, and bulky parcels of "Methody mush" or "tract trash."

At the end of the outward voyage these unopened "free gratis" parcels were frequently sold to waste-paper merchants abroad, to the benefit of the second mate—unless the first mate forestalled him.

Seeing that this was my first journey into the lazaret I took a good look around. I noticed the large, hand-printed labels on the parcels. They came from Victorian England and Scotland, and were elaborately addressed to the Mission at San Francisco. The major portion, however, had been despatched from America and Canada.

I gathered, from the instructions on special labels, that the tracts were intended to be read not only by our crew, but to be distributed (by them) among other ships abroad! What credulity! Subsequently I learned the Old Man would not have permitted them on board in the first instance were it not for the pleasant fact that he both liked and possessed the greatest respect for the Catholic Priest and English clergyman who controlled the San Francisco Mission. These men it appears possessed great honest minds, iron resolution, clear-sighted tactfulness, and fortunately an abundance of rich common sense. They were also thoroughly at home in either picking a

man up, or knocking one down. Sailors' priests absolutely.

Helplessly driven in this distribution of tracts by the powers of their respective Churches, they had no option but to send this "stuff" aboard. They knew full well from the sad but obdurate experience of having worked among the lowest of polyglot sailors, and among the most vicious, most drunken, and most dangerous waterfront in all the world, that these pages would never be read. But—well—there it was. Yankee ships were supposed to need tracts, I guess.

These cumbersome and expensive parcels of religious propaganda, upon investigation, were found to be composed, in great part, of unilluminating dead tracts. They appeared to be written for the benefit of poor sailor Jack by either noisy, uneducated pulpiteers, platitudinous religious cranks, specialists in ignorance, or by well-meaning but razor-wide New England Puritans.

Frenzied haranguers of the Almighty of all creeds, 'ists, 'ites and 'isms contributed.

Again, some of the parcels I found to be of two or three page pamphlets made up in bundles, and written by people whose intelligence and experience of the world apparently would find an ample playground upon the top of an ordinary pin.

None of these pamphlets is ever read at sea. Their luminosity is vented upon dull brass-work, dingy paint-work, or upon stubborn-lighting tobacco pipes at the galley.

Old maids—both male and female—have been told of the varied fates of these tracts over and over again. But the blunt reiteration seemingly has the strange effect of making their advent at the littoral missions of the world greater than ever! Poor Jack!

I recall the Kanaka (a native of the Pacific Islands) in the port-watch, who had been in a missionary school,

teaching the Peruvian, a thorough drunkard, the intricacies of the English alphabet from a fearsome pamphlet entitled "How to make delicious lemonade." (And this occurred just upon crossing the equator !)

Needless to say, there is no water, no sugar, no lemons, no time, no place at sea to make "Delicious Lemonade."

I might have read more of these stupid pamphlets were it not for the fact that my lamp began to burn dimly, and snatching a block or two of the "mush" I ascended.

Next morning as I made my way across the poop to obtain the two binnacle lamps for trimming, I saw our archangel busy with the tracts upon the poop-rail. Near him, upon his knees, and in his hand a "prayer-book" (lump of holystone), knelt the sailor from Baltimore, holystoning, without any marked emotional ecstasy, the poop.

Presently, he took up a sheet or two of the tracts dropped by the Archangel.

"Daniel in the lion's den," he read aloud. . . . "Guess we've just come out of it. In it agin when the mate gits well !" Then picking up another, he chuckled out : "Three guys in a fiery furnace. . . . Guess we're in there now, both feet !" and he wiped his forehead with the back of his hand, muttering "hard-boiled to a turn."

Then he fell to working again. Presently as he rubbed he looked up : "Yes, Sho-rtly, where I was raised 'way back miles from Baltimore, there was no readin', no books, no news ; and once when I complained of no news, my old Pop [father] put a Bible in these hands, and told me I'd find more news in that than I could shake a stick at. . . . I did."

Yet this irreligious but typical deep-sea sailor was the one who took a kind but unobserved, yet practical interest in Senn, the doomed sailor.

Of Senn it was said by some that he would now pull

through. They would land him at Iquique, and the shore might do for him what the sea could not. Still, I doubted it. Lately he had frequently frothed at the mouth. Yet the voyage from Mazatlan I judged had done him no real harm so far. No gales. Good sailing.

But then we had been favoured with good long slants of northerly winds in the Gulf of Panama—the prevailing winds in that quarter during October and onward.

Also we had been nursed along the S.E. monsoon drift—that ocean current that runs down the west coast of Mexico. And as we made more southing into the Gulf of Panama the winds blew much harder; so hard indeed that we for days sailed under double-reefed tops'ls.

According to the reading on the dial of our mechanical log, we threw the great blue swells behind us at the rate of eight hundred miles in four days. On other days our speed varied from fifty to one hundred and sixty miles per day, until fetching the coasts of Peru we launched into light and fresh breezes from S.S.E. and S.W., which gradually, as we approached the latitude of Callao, died away to nothing.

As the bos'un observed in the open sun on the fo'c'sle head: "Not enough wind to blow the froth off a schooner of ale!" At which remark those seasoned shell-backs around him who "indulged" wiped their mouths sadly.

The bos'un's remark emphasised a condition which irritated the temperamental skipper almost to waspishness. But when the wind blew abaft the beam—the best of all sailing points—and the *General Gordon* raced along hour after hour, the Old Man would sometimes lean over the taffrail and verily pat the ship!

"That's sure it, old gal! Pick up yer stockings! Cupid's got right hold of yer tow-rope! . . . Easy now, old gal—steady her, Tom"—this to the helmsman—"don't break her heart, she's young and eager!"

But in the calms we were "worked to death," for at every cat's paw (light and changeable puffs of wind) the sails must be trimmed, and retrimmed, and trimmed again to catch advantageously the ever-variable direction of the zephyrs. Killing work.

In these spasmodic calms we sometimes drifted contrary to our true course because we felt the influence of that coolish ocean current known as the "Peru" or "Humbolt Current," which runs northwards up the Chilian and Peruvian coasts at the rate of twelve to eighteen knots per day, beginning its steady flow just south of Valparaiso.

'Twas in such glorious weather as this that I sometimes made my way, when opportunity served, to the fore-castle-head and out as far as the crane-iron.

Sitting there and steadying myself by means of the fore-royal stay, I admired the great ship before me—an immense white cloud ever coming to me, and I ever receding.

Her beauty overpowered. I felt God breathe.

And as we gradually beat our way down the South American coast we encountered the Peruvian rollers—long oily swells that range from twenty to thirty feet in height, and—never break! Ocean sausages.

From the crane-iron I have seen her mount with regal grace these giant rolls; her forefoot treading the swells as she felt her way, and weaving wonderful, intricate, exquisite lacework patterns about her curtesying stem.

And then again, as the breeze pressed and filled her sails and stunsails, her great white body and bluff bow breasted bluish-green rollers—just like an angry swan. From that point of vantage, she looked like a great bird of the sea: for the sea; on the sea.

And these sea rollers are miles in length. Off Cape Horn they rise to a height of one hundred feet and more!

A quarter of the globe where, at times, it is considered a "short sea" if a mile and a half separate the crests of two waves! Hot spot!

And on the rotund backs, and in the ample hollow palms of these recumbent ocean giants, we gradually, but surely, drew down the coast.

We crawled, for there was little wind, into the sweltering, slumbering land, And on one fine, and very early Saturday morning in November, we dropped anchor two miles off the Chilean port of Iquique.

CHAPTER IX

A "BURST" ASHORE

I knew it was Saturday morning, for I still performed that weekly duty of oiling the hinges of the deck ports on that day. As I oiled and swung the heavy square iron ports in and out, the hinges seemed to say rhythmically: "Saturday morn—bang! Saturday morn—bang!" When I had succeeded in making them say that easily, I considered my job done. Not before.

Following this duty, another succeeded in its wake, which necessitated me rising to the occasion, so to speak—tarring foot-ropes. The foot-ropes are those miserably slender risky-looking ropes that lie along and under the yards on which men stand to bend or furl sail, attend to fouling lifts or stiffened halyards; and to obtain aching backs.

To practise this black art of tarring, one hand clutches the jackrail; the other hand clutches a piece of canvas that serves as a brush; the tarpot is slung and moved in the best way available. The performer then stoops to conquer. And God help him if any drops reach the holystoned decks below!

The great expanse of view exposed to me from the masthead gave me a good idea of the coast-line.

There before me, two short miles off, lay what appeared to be a ramshackle arrangement of small twinkling and flashing patches—galvanised roofs of houses, I guessed. A flag lay dead at the top of a long pole. No entrance to

a river met my eye; neither could I see the usual forest of ships' masts in a dock; indeed, I afterwards learnt that no Chilian port possesses a dock; except Valparaiso.

(So it is to this day.)

A Chilian battleship, a submarine, and several merchantmen of various rigs lay off the land and about us.

When I came down from aloft I hinted most gently to our Old Man that I should like to go ashore; but I met with a strong cold douche—one of his "off" moments.

But my battered optimism still survived, and prevailed eventually; for next evening, after having finished helping Sonny through with his Euclid problems, there fell upon my ears an irascible "Damn!" Then followed in the next minute another, and still more irascible "Damn!"

Close upon this succeeded a sonorous and peevish: "Curse the thing to flames! What *is* wrong with this goldarn son of a gun of a sum! I hev cast the flaming thing up five times and yit it comes to the same goldarn total; and yit it is nineteen hundred dollars wrong somewhere! I'll—oye!—Sho-rt-y! Here!"

I went. "The Old Man is flying off the handle 'proper like,'" I said to myself.

"Cast this column of crazy figures up fur me right away."

I did. It came to his previous total!

The skipper looked hard at me. Then: "Waal, I guess the damned thing is bewitched!" cried he, badly exasperated. "It is nineteen hundred dallars out somewhere! The thing's got across my bows."

I then persuaded him to let me look into the ship's accounts as there recorded in that summary column item for item, dollar for dollar.

In his desperation and dilemma—for an inaccurate ship's account is a serious matter—he agreed.

Hardly had I begun before I fortunately hit upon the error.

I showed it to him.

He gasped! "Waal, I'll be flayed alive! . . . Would yer think it! . . . me! . . . a ship's master fur years and years, to go and do an all-fired thing like that! . . . I could go and eat grass!"

He had added in the dollar column the date—1899!

Now is my time! I thought.

I put my request to him afresh; urged the fact of having saved much time, wear and tear of nerves, and placed the voyage account ship-shape for the owners' accountants to check.

For a moment he thrashed about like a bull's tail in fly-time. But he came round.

"Waal, all right, Sho-rt-y. But I can give you n money! Cotton to that! Yer know you hev not worke off all yer dead horse yit. Yer kaint go ashore with Satan's life-belts (crew), for I grant no permission to them to go ashore anyway. Lose 'em if I did. Smart crimps down here! Some boys! No, Sho-rt-y, wait until Monday. I am going ashore; and you kain join the brassbounders in the boat."

Between then and Monday I borrowed clothes right and left, for my own were quite unfit for shore voyaging. From a brassbounder Bully Smith—a lumpish youth approaching my size—I secured a coat. From Mr. Wacks, (now our third mate) a pair of smart-looking trousers that once were very smart, but now, for me, too long in one part, and in another, and more important part, much too narrow. (Indeed they split eventually, and only a safety pin kept the old flag flying, so to speak.)

An exotic shirt from another inhabitant of the half-deck—a brazen cotton affair with red little rampant horses

sprinkled all over it. Canvas shoes, a little worn, and a large cap and thin scarf from Sonny. Rigged! No money, no! Nobody had any. Brassbounders never have.

As I passed up the deck on Monday morning, just before joining the brassbounders in the boat, I heard someone shout raucously to Slush, the negro cook, words to the effect: "Are you going ashore to visit the Chilians?"

"Me! goan ashore to veesit dos Chilians! Dos foreignahs! Dos lime suckahs! Me! No! Dis chickan loan't go to see *dem*! If dey woant dis chickan, dey must urahly come right aboard dis ol' hookah an' approach—dat's de word 'approach'—dis gelman from ol' Alabam in 'is boodwah, de galley. Make no mistake!"

And with the mock air of a steer-packing Chicago millionaire, he with one epic sweep of his large black hand, stooped to peel a potato.

I strode aft and dropped into the boat in readiness.

I found the long boat had been put over! Why not the gig—an ultra smart varnished and spotless affair? In the boat came a moment or two afterwards our likeable Kanaka—a six-foot man coloured to the tone of a southern Italian; and the Chilian, Señor Arturo Marcelo Allesandri (whom we called Tom for short); also Leith Scotty and the sailor from Baltimore. Ben, I regret to say, was not chosen for this. Presently four apprentices came along, followed in a moment by the Old Man and Sonny.

"Why the long boat?" I whispered to Leith Scotty.

But he only winked his eye. Canny Scot!

Once clear of the ship, we began to pull steadily but perhaps a trifle irregularly. Upon observing which, the Kanaka broke into a rowing chanty. In one of the sweetest and most haunting of silvery voices he entered upon one of his beloved boat songs, a dreamy, droning

melody of the beauteous isles of the Pacific—his native home.

" Rite ko te rité
Te ihu takoto atu
Waenga kia rité
Te kei akina
Aha—aha ! "

(" Together boys, all together ! For'ard oars there, dip together. Midships there, keep time ! Aha—aha ! ")

He made me dream in that long ago of languorous blue lagoons, moonlit bayoos, tall palm-trees, silvery silent beaches, and fairy coral reefs.

And thus he continued to sing until we reached a landing jetty.

Cried the skipper : " Hang some on." We made fast with the painter.

" Sho-rt-y, you and Sonny come right along with me. You boys kain take a spell ashore—no wine-guzzling saloons, no high-falutin women, mind. (They had no money for either.) You men see to it thet there is always two of you remaining in the boat. And, all cotton on to this : Thet every one of you, except these two of my boys, to be slick and ready outside the España Hotel at ten o'clock to-night. I hev some baggage to bring down."

(I think I saw Leith Scotty wink at me !)

We then left.

He once turned back and told two of the apprentices privately to keep an eye on the boat every ten minutes in case—and to look out for a possible signal from the ship. (A Ship's Master must ever be on the alert for all possible eventualities. All is not fair wind in his life. No !)

Reaching the somewhat unkempt Plaza the Captain rounded upon me. " Look after Sonny for some hours.

I hev some shipping business to attend to jest here in the *calle*. Jest walk and sally around the main streets, the market and the depôt and sech, and be at the España Hotel at 7 o'clock. I'm going to give you and Sonny a dinner ! ”

Great heavens ! Hotel dinner ! A thing I had not experienced for weeks and weeks ! Soft eatable bread ! Pudding perhaps ! Salad ! Fresh fruit maybe ! Iced water ! I gasped ! Ye gods of Athens !

I turned. He was gone.

Sonny and I then began to “sally about.” We saw *la estacion* (station) : *el tren* (the train) ; the market situated in Calle Vivar—a very interesting affair. We peeped into a few churches—all Catholic, and all beautiful and rich, yet not old. One little church, however, in a mean little sun-baked street, seemed new and poor ; for on the altar stood four beer bottles of well-known British brand, with a holy candle stuck in each !

“Guess some fly guy has pinched the silver ones,” opined the precocious Sonny.

Perhaps. But the congregation being all Spanish-speaking, they probably would not be able to read and comprehend the eye-pulling labels on the bottles.

Coming into the glaring sun again—for not by any chance can one come out into the rain, because it never rains in Iquique and district !—we felt a little fatigued.

We turned into a café. Sonny having in his possession ten pesos (about \$5 or £1 then), we ordered elaborately by means of very telling, and very tortuous, grimaces. We drank delicious coffee and ate some equally delicious tortas, and one or two strange but elegant concoctions of paste and currants, the name of which escapes me, but not the taste. Sonny also stood me a *cigarro*, and himself a *cigarillo*. . . . Millionaires !

At length we strolled down to the boat to see how the men in charge were doing.

Leith Scotty had just reached the top of the landing jetty preparatory to a stroll.

He saw me. "Look here," he said, drawing a small lump of something from the inside of his shirt, "see this? It is a real uniquee! . . . See the wee fly, and wee bit of straw have all been shanghaied."

I looked and examined

It was a piece of amber of a greenish colour. I had seen a specimen of this most remarkable colour in our laboratory in Chicago; but not so large a piece; and certainly with no caught objects. Yellow amber is common; blue extremely rare, green, the kind and shade Scotty possessed, considerably rarer. In it, as he stated, was "frozen" a black fly and a bit of straw. Returning it to him I felt reminded of those piquant lines of Pope:

"Pretty! in amber to observe the forms,
Of hairs, of straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
These things we know are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there!"

"I'm going to sell it, maun," he said shortly.

I felt keen regret in being unable to offer him a ready money bid. I knew the specimen to be of uncommon value, both financially and scientifically. But—well—there it was; fortune knocking, and I could not answer. (One of the many drawbacks of being shanghaied.)

Eventually I learned that Scotty had parted with his amber for an utterly ridiculous sum to a rascally jeweller in the main "Calle" of Iquique.

Such is the sailor ashore. Such is an omnivorous Scotsman hard pressed for a taste of his native "tea"—the "tea," as Scotty proudly boasted, that "could make a rabbit spit at a bulldog."

CHAPTER X

"BAGGAGE!"

A little later on in the evening, as Sonny and I anxiously strolled towards the España for our promised dinner, we passed Leith Scotty. This finely made Scotsman, six-foot two, if an inch, and as strong as an ox—one of our four ace sailormen—swung along as though in a hurry to perform some duty or mission.

He had had "one or two"; but not "two or three." With a cheery nod he passed us.

So did also some *putas* and *putitas* (untranslatable).

Entering this substantial hotel with the four expensive trees in front, we were affably met, or rather seized by, our Old Man, who directed us to an open table; while he joined some white and yellow friends—one in uniform—already seated at another.

Presently four bronzed Englishmen—Londoners by their accent—sat down near our table to take their coffee, and began an animated conversation concerning a new and great water-pipe line, or conduit, leading from a place called Pica to Iquique, that had recently been completed by the celebrated Colonel North of London. Evidently our neighbours were civil engineers.

I listened; for apart from being of the same profession, it was good to hear, for a change, really good grammatical and nicely pronounced English.

No one knows, except those who have been exiled or fixed abroad, what a strange but profound pleasure it is to hear falling on one's ear the dear, delightful syllables

of one's own language. Nectar on a parched tongue.

“Well, you chaps, the job is over—gone up the spout! We dodge home on the bally old mail-boat to-morrow to Valparaiso; thence via the bally Strait of Magellan to London,” cried one of the men enthusiastically, and continued: “water in this confounded hole, if no more earthquakes occur, can now be sold at half a crown per ton, and——”

“A jolly good profit at that, too,” broke in another.

Ah! Then this was the reason why our Old Man, unaware of the new and present conditions, impressed such stringent restrictions on the ship's water on our way down! Crafty dog! The more we drank and used, so much the more he would be obliged to acquire and disgorge for at Iquique! Perhaps, in face of this new and low price, the ship's water trouble in the future would be well allayed, or perhaps would even disappear.

Presently, the *coffee con leche* drunk, our neighbor departed. And indeed I could have caught but little more of their most interesting conversation, for, apart from two balloon Germans drinking soup near by, I was too engrossed in one of the most filling and swelling dinners it has ever been my good luck to send out of this world.

Dinner is called “comida” down there; but it is none the worse for that. Even to the omnipresent tip—which the captain paid—is termed, succinctly, a “punta.” And the tippee, a yellow rascal.

I much enjoyed the dinner. Hunger and deprivation may have been contributory causes. Even Sonny loosened his belt one hole.

When all was over and decks cleared the skipper sauntered over with a slight list (due perhaps to the aquadiente aboard his 'tween decks), and beckoned Sonny to stand by, while he directed me to bear down the side alley of the hotel, enter the courtyard, and on a sort

of handcart with solid wooden wheels, to load up some loose baggage that lay about it.

I wondered why he did not employ a mule vehicle, or burro-cart. I went. I did it. I returned and reported. "All on, sir."

"Then whisk the whole damn lot right away to the boat—sharp! and return on time with Satan's lifebelts at 10 o'clock! Stand by in the courtyard yonder until—until I come. . . . Not a dot to the others about yer dinner mind!"

I have kept the secret for twenty-five years!

With "Aye, aye, sir," I departed.

At ten o'clock we all stood gravely by in the courtyard, except two brassbounders left in the longboat on guard—these latter were armed, for this was the time of the great lighter strike in Iquique when we purloined lighters: even with revolvers pointed at our bodies by "dagos," who possessed the will, but not the pluck, to fire. I think their penchant lay rather towards a sharp silent knife.

A little after ten, the skipper showed up, and directed us to load up more "baggage." And here Leith Scott's great strength and skill exhibited itself.

The "baggage" this time proved both ponderous and unwieldy. But my voice helped, and the picturesque and complete curses of the two brassbounders clinched matters. They could roll their *l*'s and *r*'s!

The vitriolic expletives of Tom the Peruvian, combined with the simple smiles of the Kanaka, seemed to put the hook and eye on everything, and leave nothing further to be desired, except to get "it" down to the boat.

We started. We passed in the gloomy darkness La Adriana (the Custom House). And just here as we trundled over a short stretch of rough road we thought we heard a slight crash.

"Cruz! Bottella!" ejaculated the Peruvian.

Thinking this a swear we took no notice.

But out of the Custom House at this moment hurried an emblazoned official. He saluted effusively our Old Man. I then unwittingly overheard an underbreath colloquy, in which the words "vino," "amigo" occurred very frequently; and other words, which seemed connected with port dues and wharfage.

As the bland official lit a cigar, I recognised him as one of the animated and laughter-filled friends who had sat down at our Captain's table.

Leaving us to advance, they resumed their engrossing conversation, and presently there reached us loud and merry laughter. Excellent laughter.

"Very good friends!" I whispered up to Leith Scotty.

"A hundred peesos I should say, laddie. D'ye ken? Yes? . . . These Custom gillies town py this coast do not lauch no, pelow ten peesos. D'ye ken? The measure of ta pay iss judged by ta lauch—d'ye ken?"

Yes, I "kenned" all right at last. . . . The long-boat—the night—the "baggage." Yes, I kenned at last!

But a skipper must live!

We trudged on. Arrived at the boat the two sleepy brassbounders below threw us up a rope-sling, and soon we had safely and silently dropped the contents of our cart aboard our boat. Somehow there prevailed and persisted a sweet expensive odour of wine. Yes, doubtless from a broken bottle—a much more interesting affair than an empty one.

As we put out our oars our Old Man rapped out: "*Buenas noches*" to the long dark blot above us on the jetty, from which was returned: "*Buenas noches*"—and a laugh. (This Custom House Officer seemed full of *Buenas Noches* and chuckles).

Then in the breathless darkness we pulled—pulled rhythmically to the low sweet tones of the Kanaka's boatsong. But, nevertheless, it proved heavy going, for our boat was loaded down almost to her gun'ls. But fortunately there appeared no "lop" on the water. No remarks were passed, except one from Leith Scotty, just as my eyes caught sight of a small boat leaving the deep shadows of our own vessel, to the effect that the *Chrysomene* on our nor'ard was heaving her anchors to leave. We had all looked and had caught the sharp clink-clink of her anchor chains about her revolving capstan.

When we stole under the lee quarter of our own ship, we found Ben leaning tranquilly over the lee rail. Evidently he was anchor watch. The rest of the crew would be all asleep in the forecabin.

After taking off the hatches of the lazaret, and then heaving, lowering and stowing all the "baggage" therein, and refixing our boat on the skids, we prepared to turn in.

I was about to follow the rest, when Ben clutched my arm arrestingly and said loud enough for the others to hear: "The riding-light on the fore-stay is doing badly—it is your work. Go and see to it."

As I reached the forestay and was preparing to lower the light from forty feet up to the hanks on the bowsprit, Ben suddenly added in a tense whisper: "That lamp is all right. I only wanted to have a quiet word with you. Let's go and sit lower down on the mooring bitts awhile, where it's all possum and safe."

We strode to the starboard mooring bitts. But I wondered at his words.

We sat. Then, excitedly, but in awed whispering voice, Ben suddenly blurted: "Senn is gone!" . . .

"When did he die? . . . Poor fellow!"

"He didn't die! Guess he's as much alive as you or me!"

"W-what do you mean, Ben?" cried I, suddenly sitting upright.

"Waal, jest this: About three bells [9.30] I was jest leaning over the rail, right in the shadow of the frame-shack [deckhouse] thinking of 'her,' when I heard a boat pulled softly alongside by one of those dagos, 'fleteros' they call 'em."

I nodded comprehensively.

"I was jest about to call out and ask him his darn business there at that hour, when at the very same moment who should appear right here beside me, jest like a shaker ghost, and with his beard cropped all right close, but—Senn!" . . .

"Great Scott! Yes, go on!"

"Senn cried, 'Hush! I'm making ma get-away!' He——"

"But, Ben, poor old Senn can't talk English!" I broke in.

"Bull's foot! He can jest talk English as plain as I can, or the President of the United States!—only with a Jock accent!"

"Sure, Ben?" said I, aghast. "Are you sure—absolutely?"

"Sure, absolutely! As I spoke to him he took off one of his shoes, and from the sole took a paper out and forced it into my hands—five dollars! Yes, sree, five dollars!"

"Well, I wouldn't call the Pope my uncle!" . . . I felt, in Ben's words, 'hard-boiled.'

"Yes, all tha-at, and Senn added, as he patted my shoulder, tha-at it was a damned good fight, and tha-at he had heard the whacks as far off as the fo'c'sle. Told me the crew had said at the time tha-at next week was at yer elbow compared with where I knocked him to. I guess it was. And—oh yes, he gave me five dollars to give to you, and five dollars—all in bills out of his shoes—to give to Leith Scotty, his countryman!"

I could say nothing. Was I dreaming in my insect-ridden bunk? No. Though it was dark the form of Ben loomed up beside me. But I grasped him to make sure. Senn a Scotsman! Senn, the invalid, a possum! . . . Well, well! . . .

CHAPTER XI

"SEA POSSUM"

"Senn had no time to say more'n to tell me to spread it about on board that he had committed suicide," said Ben. "He jest said, too, that the Chilian ambulance folks were coming for him to-morrow morning—skipper had told him so; and he couldn't face that crowd for, as he said, though the skipper found him all wrong, they would find him all right!—as healthy as a trout. You can't dodge a real doctor long."

"He then dropped into the boat from a lanyard, loose hanging from the deadeyes, the yella guy in the boat bubbled: 'Benas noshees' and—they were gone!"

Astounded beyond measure at the news I presently recovered sufficiently to recall the small boat which I had seen in the shadows when approaching our ship an hour ago; also Leith Scott's casual, but dexterous, action in drawing everyone's attention in the opposite direction, where the *Chrysomene* was leaving for sea.

Yes, dawn was breaking slowly, Canny Scot!

But Ben knew no more, and it had taken him a considerable time to say even what he had, due to his natural hesitancy of speech. And at this moment he was much exercised as to what should be his immediate course of action: 'To say or not to say.'

I could but advise strenuous silence. The anchor-watch, as I pointed out to him, is not supposed to rummage about in the forecastle—and be soundly cursed—until the time arrives to call the day watch at 5.45 a.m.

This reassured Ben immensely. He decided to act upon "mum is the word." And I, as I strolled aft to my

bunk, pondered deeply upon the idiosyncrasies of life in general, and the extraordinary histrionic dexterity of some sailors in particular.

"Leith Scotty, the co-conspirator," I said to myself, "is to be approached delicately, and at a suitable moment. If I catch the proper slant of his mind he will tell me the other half of the story perhaps. In the meantime: 'Silence is golden.'"

When I showed a toe on deck the next morning, the men were swilling down the decks. The sailor from Baltimore, gracefully poised on one tanned and well-cured leg, the heel of the other lifted, and the toes nicely kissing the deck, threw, with that skill born only of long practice, a bucketful of sea water in such a circular way as to form just a film of water around him.

It is an art. But to lift by means of a rigged roller one hundred and fifty-two buckets of water before breakfast from over the side to feed him is not. I know.

At about the end of the business a neighbouring captain from a Yankee brig—the *Pentock*, of Nova Scotia, lying to the nor'ard of us—came aboard.

Later in the morning, while Sonny and I were earnestly solving some "Quads," and the two captains busily exchanging news and views, I overheard the Nova Scotia captain burst out with the most utter surprise—

"Pay the crew, captain! Pay the darned crew! Why, Lord bless my icy soul I hev'n't paid a crew for five years!"

And he gave a deprecatory sniff.

"Waal," drawled our Old Man, "I shall pay every man what is due to him now his dead-horse is eaten—hev another glass of wine . . . the best on the coast. . . . Yes, I'll pay every man, and——"

"Die a poor man," completed the other, putting down his wine-glass.

Say, captain, this is darned good wine," remarked

the Nova Scotian, smacking his lips noisily and eyeing conjecturally for a moment the bottle. "What did yer pay for it? We leave on to-night's tide. Should like to take a few cases with me. . . . Eh? What did you say you paid?"

Our Old Man leaned over, said a word, and winked wickedly.

The other looked puzzled.

"Bought it at market price I tell yer—took long-boat ashore—returned by night," and here he winked significantly . . . "pots full of bother; but at last managed it."

His companion still saw no light.

Our skipper then roared loud and long, holding his sides, bulging with laughter at the other's stupidity.

For our Old Man prided himself on knowing a "thing or two," if not three, of doings in foreign ports.

So overcome was he at last with violent laughter that he poked his staring and stupefied companion in the ribs with a scale ruler lying beside him; following it with roars of intense laughter. . . .

"I-I-I bam-bozzled the—c-customs with seventy p-pesos! . . . Ah! Ah! Ah!" And the cabin rang.

"But you damned chitmonk [fathead,] there is no Custom dues on the export of wine, jest now, during this darned lighter strike!—dues temporarily lifted!"

. . . . Our Old Man shut up like a jack-in-the-box. "My God!" he murmured limply, and subsided into his chair, his face as white as a moth-ball.

At this moment I went on deck—I thought it best. . . . No wonder that very affable Custom-house officer laughed and chuckled so much coming down the shore road. . . .

The suitable moment, and the proper slant of wind to approach Leith Scotty, in reference to "Senn the

Norwegian," never seemed to occur. Many times had I diplomatically suggested the showing of his hand in this strange affair, but he had always successfully negated my attempts in this direction.

But at last success came.

We were on the homeward passage from Newcastle (N.S.W.) with coal, bound for Speckle's Wharf, San Francisco.

When beating about off the Farallone Islands, about twenty miles or more outside the Golden Gate, waiting for a tow-boat—the wind being strong and easterly—and Leith Scotty believing that we should never meet again (which, so far has actually been the case) he put out his hands, or rather his elbows on the lee rail of the fo'c'sle-head and said—

"Meester Pailey [I had by this time risen to the dignity of having a handle fitted to my name]—Meester Pailey, t'ken when at Iquique it wass only at ta last moment t'at ta skipper she mak up her mind [the Highland Scots use feminine pronouns for masculine ones—"her" for "him" or "his": "she" for "he"] tae tak me along inta shore boat yes?

"I had put time tae run tae ta fo'c'sle tae tak ma coat, hav a word with Senn, an' tak ma uniquee yes. You tid see ma uniquee : t'at piece off green amper [green amber] with ta wee fly and ta straw caught in it yes."

I nodded.

"Weel, I wass forced for tae sell it at any price, though t' wass worth a great teal off siller. Put I hadna na siller, tan' t' wass a kittle piece of work tae find ta siller tae pay ta fleteros [boatmen] tae tak her [his] boat at ta certain times tae our ship yes ; ass weel ass tae puy a pair off ta scissors tae cut Senn's peard which ass you will mind, had crown tae a muckle length—her not peing an elder off ta kirk no. Put her had already cut her peard somehow. Prattling Pen said so.

"I solt ta uniquee, an' ta boat went forrat with ta scissors. T'was t'at fery [very] boat we tid meet ass we cam' neat tae ta ship t'at night."

"Yes, Scotty, I remember it well—you drew the attention of all of us in an opposite direction, to look at the *Chrysomene* leaving for sea."

And then Leith Scotty quietly related how he had discovered that he had once been shipmates years ago with Senn; and how one night Senn, in his obscure bunk near the stem, still full of acute chest pains, but slowly recovering, disclosed the fact that at the time of being shanghaied in our ship he had just completed a long and dreary fifteen months' voyage; and had been paid off in San Francisco; and how Senn had craftily laid most of his dollar bills in a good and handy bank—his shoes; keeping out a ten dollar bill or so for immediate use.

He then, as Leith Scotty put it: "Walked on guid money, an' went for tea pooze in a canny way, an' cot partly fleich [tipsy] on ta tangle-foot [rye whisky]; becayse there wass nane off oor guid usquebauch [genuine Highland whisky] solt on ta Mission Wharf."

"I see," I returned, wondering, why he did not try Market Street near by.


"Then Calico Jin cot her, an' filled hiss wame [stomach] with ta dope, an' took all ta siller off her. Put t'ye ken her still had all hiss paper tollars in her shoon! [shoes]."

I murmured: "Scotland for Ever!"

My informant then went on to explain in detail how Senn, finding himself shanghaied, immediately, and with the utmost sangfroid and determination, resolved to utter no English word: to pose as a foreigner, stupid, and no sort of sailor.

We know already all that had happened to him at Mazatlan, Mexico—almost murder. Recovering gradually, due to an iron constitution, and the benign influence

of pure sea air and rest, he successfully feigned continued illness within.

 In this he was doubtless helped much by taking the skipper's veteran medicines: No. 13 and No. 8! But perhaps he was mainly helped in the achievement of his purpose by Leith Scotty, who, it appears, used to put soap on Senn's lips, which Senn would froth a little, and thus provide a foul breath, a quick heartbeat, occasional vomit, and altogether the appearance of a man doomed. Determined fellow, Senn!

But why did Leith Scotty do all this?

First, because Senn was an old and revered shipmate; and secondly, Senn was a born Highlander of the Clan MacDonald! Leith Scotty came of the Clan MacPherson. Their clanish spirits amalgamated. Their forebears had fought side by side in the '45.

That is all.

At the conclusion of his narrative I congratulated him upon his astute kindness to his old shipmate—it was he, himself, I recalled who had carelessly hinted the fact about the ship, which, of course, was never denied, that the shanghaied man's name was Senn, a Norwegian, and quite ignorant of either English or sailing.

"Scotty," said I, turning to leave the o'c'sle-head "you will land in Heaven, all right."

"Nae, laddie," he returned, "I would pe thinking t'at there would be ower muckle work for tae mak' ta parrich for ane [one]!"

.

And that is the counterfoil of the true story of that extraordinary shanghaied man we knew as "Senn the Norwegian."

Did I visit the police relative to my own case of shanghaieing when I landed in San Francisco? No!

Why ? Because it is useless to demand, even to hope for, aid from police who pay (did then pay) five hundred dollars (£100) or the “ honour ” of patrolling that coveted beat along the water front of San Francisco. Graft ! Drink ! Women ! Crimps ! And—*glorious, glorious dollars* ! All earned in Hell ! Hideous to recall—yes, hideous.

CHAPTER XII

INTO THE PACIFIC

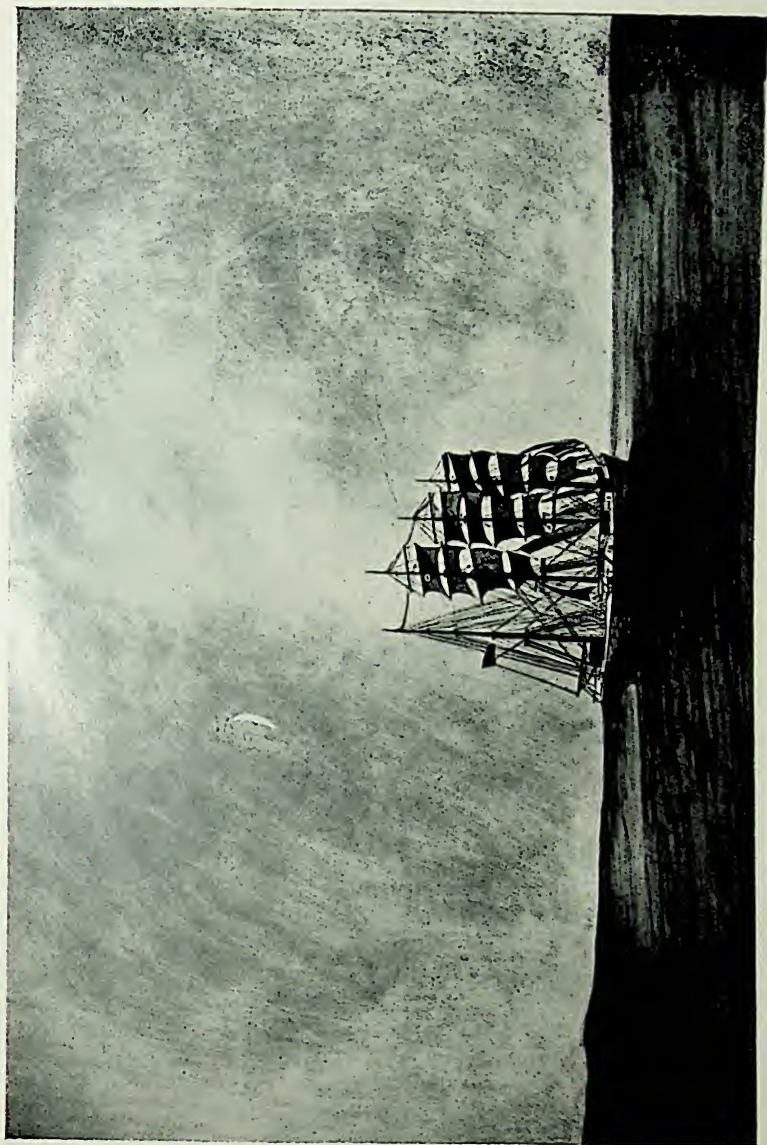
One night before the gentle purr of a southerly zephyr, we stole from Iquique when all the Chilian coast a solemn stillness held. As a rule, there used to be a friendly fuss made when a ship left but due to the lighter strike and its varied attendant troubles during our stay, ships left silently.

Five arduous paint-chipping, lighter-purloining, and gear overhauling weeks we had spent there—a coast as bare of foliage and interest—except geological—as a nigger's heel ; but healthy.

Now, loaded within a gnat's eyebrow of our marks, with thousands of gunny bags straight from the "oficinas," filled with nitrate beneath our decks, and our vessel sailing six inches by the stern, we gallantly nosed into the dark immense open, as thousands of sailing vessels had done before ; but, alas ! few will ever do again.

Astern the twinkling lights of Iquique drawing ever further and further away. Ahead, the lonely, heaving ocean—the great, fascinating, unknowable deep. Our ship nestled into it. . . . 'Twas her sweetheart !

I paced the decks awhile, ruminating over many things. Presently, Ben, after finishing his watch, joined me, and said : " Now for Violette ! God bless her five foot three and little finger tips. Only seven thousand miles to Sydney, and tha-at ain't much when you forget the noughts ! Every time I jest think of her name I hev a feeling like warm molasses going down my spine ! Fact. . . . You don't know jest how dandy she is ! She comes



" ONE NIGHT WE STOLE FROM IQUIQUE, WHEN ALL THE CHILIAN COAST A SOLEMN STILLNESS HELD "

Facing p. 104

from a dandy stock ; an' the farther back you get 'em, the dandier they are ; and she comes from the farthest back ! ”

“ H'm.” That is all I could say, so said it.

“ Say, Bo,” he continued, as he took my arm, “ I jest made a straight coat-tail up the lane to her heart,” gurgled the ecstatic Ben. “ No shinnanikin ; jest tried . . . tha-at's all. After a good while—for she was as coy as a fawn—I saw a light in her eye : a new kind of light that seemed to tell me she was awakening to my call like—you Sho-rty can't understand tha-at . . . not yet anyways.”

I nodded suitably. I certainly had seen no light in any girl's eye like that.

“ Waal, tha-at light came into her eyes ; and with a light tha-at was already in mine a flame was kindled between us tha-at started such a strange fire tha-at it slowly, but surely, grew into a bonfire ; then into a conflagration so big tha-at tha-at old swimming bath 'way back in San Francisco could not douche it, nor (and here he glanced contemptuously at the ocean) nor this little old lot over the side either ! ”

I nodded credulously. “ Some fire, Ben,” I returned, not comprehending ; for I have learned later that no one on earth, be he of the highest intelligence and possessed of the intellect of an Einstein, comprehends love in the least degree, save alone those who have basked in the blissful light of its wondrous radiance. It is another world. For many, though married, never to be entered. For others, far beyond their puny reach because of their innate selfishness. It is the one touch of Divinity vouchsafed to us on earth. Ben, I know now, had not, as thousands do daily, woefully mistaken physical passion for love : the evanescent for the everlasting. He had not, for all his humble training, confounded body with soul ; mistaken the adjunct for the main : the

third of God's holy trinity for the first : the cocoon for the crysalis—No !

And many a quiet talk about that golden thread in life's tangled skein had Ben and I, as in bare feet, or in sennit (canvas) sandals, we paced slowly through the shadow pools and moonlit patches that bespangled the silent and ivory-coloured deck. I still can recall the picture of our pacing abaft the deck-house, and seeing the solid purple shadows cast by mainsail or staysail—ghostly mystic shadows—everchanging, ever gliding athwart the vessel as she gently heaved like a bosom to the ocean's languorous swell. And around about I still can see the thin criss-cross fabric-looking shadows cast by webby shrouds and spidery cordage.

All these maritime things we said contained symbols of love's phases. For love casts many shadows and criss-crosses upon the deck of life. Also we glimpsed and symbolised the southern stars aloft that sparkled through the cordage, like diamonds netted in the ropery of the rigging. Souls emmeshed in earth's entanglements, said we.

From Ben, on that memorable moonlit night, in his quaint untutored language, I caught, for the first time in my life, the loom of some grand incomprehensible magnetic light. I caught touch with an elysian light, although then but a loom, that followed me down the years and lit in ecstasy my unfolding soul—much as the *aurora borealis*, in the ever silent mystic North, lights and stills by its glorious beauty all our body senses. Or again, like a ship at sea was I, which discerns the loom of the lighthouse light long before she sees the light itself. Even the loom brings great joy.

And so as young men on that moonlit southern night in the long ago we quietly discussed many, many things ; and fondly paced the deck accompanied only by the whispering sound of a shivering sail, or the sigh of a burdened yard, until Ben, at last tiring, sought rest in the seclusion of his bunk.

Even at this moment I see his broad well-knit figure, in the southern moonlight, swinging through the fore-castle starboard door. A rope yarn served as his belt. His erstwhile suspenders—silk affairs with gaudy flower-pattern, and fitted with little ropes and pulleys—doubtless now posed on the great hunched back of Calico Jim in San Francisco, for Ben, since being on board, possessed none. A strip of sail cloth fastened to the port bow of his trousers, crossing the left shoulder and made fast to the starboard quarter of the same garment were all that took the responsibility. Just single rig.

Dear old melancholy, hesitating, fighting Ben ! Clean-minded Ben !

As he disappeared at eight bells the port watch came tumbling out on deck, and soon obeyed a call to brace up the yards, to haul sheets well home, and to haul taut the bowlines ; for we now were sailing " full and by " ; which in the case of our ship meant sailing within six points. That is, we were sailing W.N.W. to the wind due north—our set course.

As they worked I glanced aloft. Soon the sails were held like boards in the giant grip of sheet, tack and bowline ; the gracefully rounded luff and leech leaving no crease or crinkle twixt yard and foot ; a sight gladdening and satisfying to a seaman's heart and eye. And the sails being of cotton, they presented a snowy, bulging cloud, gleaming aloft in the moonlight with a death-like sheen upon their fulness ; and the outspreading clews like the tips of angels' wings.

We were now snug for the night and all easy.

Feeling tired, and the night warm, I lay down on deck near a stiffener at the break of the poop, put the round of a bucket under my head, and began a little peaceful idling and thinking.

After passing over Senn's "suicide" lightly--much as the crew had done—I turned and churned many facts

in my mind ; the principal of which comprised the unfortunate recovery of the kicking mate, who, though as white as a maggot, and possessed of the wisdom of such, had reappeared on deck, and had already begun to turn again the ship into a Yankee floating hell. (In the very old days, after being defeated fistically, he would have been forced to seek the oblivion of the fore-castle, be an A.B., and mix with the "herd"—so Old Man Smith told me ; but in my time it was not so.)

Another fact—and it impressed me as an ominous one—lay in his avoidance of Ben. Perhaps, in his jungle mind, he guessed Ben possessed his revolver and knuckleduster—things that could talk to him in his own language. Perhaps he felt afraid of Ben.

But somehow, intuitively perhaps, I rather felt that this brute had little fear ; that he but patiently waited for a moment, a moment, deadly sudden, and innocently opportune, to strike Ben down. I read this much in those small glittering eyes of his—the eyes of the adder.

I told Ben. And I watched the mate.

Even on this first day out, apart from discontinuing the afternoon watches below ("It made men too b——fat," he said), he had callously sentenced the nipper—a mere boy—to carry indefinitely a heavy capstan-bar around the deck-house, as a punishment for some trumpery misunderstanding of duty—in all probability due to himself, because his speech now, through the past fistic attentions of Ben, was quite inarticulate. No one could understand him at all.

Ruminating over these things I fell asleep.

I awoke at eight bells (4 a.m.) by someone of the port watch stumbling over my feet—(often the mate keep his men working at night)—and suggesting as he fled that I stored them in the lazaret. And a sailor in a Yankee ship never forgets his adjectives.

Four a.m. ! That is the time at sea in the southern

Pacific to view the wonders of the heavens ! Good Orion is mending and hastening his steps towards the horizon in the west. Canopus—that friend of the dozy steersman—is sailing high and clear off the after swifters. And there away over the sea line, to the south'ard, the historic Southern Cross ; whilst the Dog Star scintillates amicably from above the jigger truck. Dear old watchful pals and close companions in many a lonely watch amid leagues of languorous heaving sea ! The pale eternal moon throws a silvery shimmering lane from her home aloft to our ship beneath. And the masts swing slowly in graceful rhythm to the pulsation of dear ocean's heart : hesitating but a moment in their path to leeward as if listening to catch the sound of some deep and glorious requiem sung in the depths below for all poor drowned sailor men. And they, the masts, are Neptune's monitors that play a gallant part in pointing out the way their imprisoned spirits fled in that last passage from this troublous earth. All is good. All is grand. Yes, I thought and saw and now know that all is great. Very great.

Thinking thus, as I often did at sea, I note in the East a thin streaky glow : there is a little light : trade clouds both feathery and fleecy are rapidly shewing form, and even colour above the horizon. Soon I catch their detail outline amid paling stars, and note that cabalistic Jupiter still holds his diamond sway in the grand diadem aloft. . . .

One bell !—half-past four !

And then : "Aw—ll's well !"

I glance above my head and catch a glimpse of a great black blob leaning lazily over the poop rail—the mate ! He looks aloft, sniffs the wind, notes the leech of our royal, and growling, turns to the helmsman : "Keep'r full !—damn you !"

Instantly the leech of the sail stiffens. She is 'full.'

The ever pugnacious dawn is wrestling now with

night. . . . Night is yielding. Shadows grow fainter. The criss-crossings and purple shadows upon the deck grow fainter. In the quarter coops our chickens flutter and cackle : old Goliath—the rooster—crows valiantly.

I rise and take in the side lights for'ard, from the port and starboard lighthouses. They throw now but a sickly glare in these first streaks of dawn. There is no head light, as in the case of steamers, to take in, so I return to my bucket pillow for a moment or two—my starting time is four bells (6 a.m.).

Two bells ! . . . "Aw—ll's well !"

Presently I catch the sound of spitting and crackling wood—Slush is in his galley preparing the morning coffee. A yellowish lane of light issues from the galley door. And in that lane of light about the door, I see the figures of the impatient deck watch and the idlers in all states of dishabille, clamouring for the succulent and sustaining cup—although the coffee is coffee in name only.

"Now den, doctor, yew black debbil, pull dem dah socks ob your'n up ! [This from Tarry Tom.] Yew ain't slick enough to warm water for a shore babber. . . . Now den ! no back lash ! . . . Time is on de wing ! as missionary Crawford says in 'Frisco—Eh ? No, no cream in it dis morning, Mr. Slush ! Jest let this chickan hev 'is tea 'n toast at eleven o'clock sharp, as usual—needn't send a spoon with it, jest de cream jug ! I——"

"Git to 'ell out of it !" someone interrupted.

"Push it along, doctor," breaks in Chips, a man who must always be listened to in important matters like this. "Don't mind his goldarn dippy rot, jest hustle some, else we shan't git it down 'fore this side of four bells [6 a.m.]."

"Aye," adds another, "the Mate ez his eye on them thar main tacks and fore sheets : tops'l halyards 'r expecting a sweat too—those damn tops'ls never did fit the yards ; made by a dressmaker I guess !"

"Git on with it, Slush—lively ! else the b——mate 'ill be flogging the clock, and we git no coffee. I think—— Put the b—— handle of t'blasted thing over this way, you darned pot-herb !"

With that the coffee now well "blasted," "goldarned," and "damned" became distributed. I get up for my share and receive the "bo'sun's share" (all grounds). Protests are useless. Slush consoles me scantily with : "Dat on de British ships day doant git no coffee, I knows, I hev bin cook on de liners !" (both lies).

I turn and look over the rail.

The sun's upper limb now peeps above the sharp horizon, making all out there a golden resplendent domain ; a domain whose radiance and magnetic power lifts the very soul of one to awesome heights ; freeing for a moment one's fettered spirit ; and obliterating all the bodily senses. I am spell-bound. I exist elsewhere. Elysium.

It is a morning to be alive ! Every nuance of emotion vibrates ! And yet some say there is no God !

I dodge for a moment into the half deck to get a match to light a morning pipe. But inside there, amid bundles of gently swinging sea clothes—like dead men hanging—and snoring apprentices, it feels as stuffy, and as close, and as smelly as though I had stuffed my head into an old clothes bag full of firemen's shirts.

Only two ports ventilate the half deck, and these are never opened—I doubt whether they could be. Fortunately, it is not many miles to the deck and fresh air, so I find myself outside in a moment.

The men of the morning watch are about. Their real work commences at three bells (5.30 a.m.). The mate is leaning against the chart house smoking, but his beady, eagle eyes are aloft scanning and scrutinizing sails and yards.

It matters not a tinker's curse that on the previous

evening in the first watch all the running gear was sweated to the last sweat, and the wind still breathing from the same quarter, morning always will find wrinkles in the clews of the t'gan'sls, or a minute but unsightly sag in the roach of a top-s'l. Clew lines, sheets, braces and lifts give in a most mysterious manner ; indeed all lines seemingly are slackened by the imps of darkness during the night.

But all must now be trimmed, tautened, and made magnificently O.K. before the Old Man rises to the daylight to take his morning constitutional upon the weather side of the poop.

At length the mate reaches out for the bell-lanyard, and on the very tick, strikes the brightly-polished ship's bell three strokes—5.30 ! Then off like a bull he rushes for'ard.

The men spring to execute as his orders rattle forth like shots from a maxim gun. A new day has commenced. All the morning watch have been turned to.

I go aft to the wheel, take away the binnacle lamps, and note as I do so, the smoked-covered glass of the compass ; the card beneath can just be discerned through an opaque space in the centre of the smudge. No one can rectify this smoky matter except the skipper. *He* bought the oil—the cheapest of mineral oil. Probably his daughter learnt to play the piano from an Italian professor on the profit—and the cost of a helmsman's eyes.

With the binnacle lamps in my hand, I descend the weather gangway, and make my way to the port half-deck, which we now use as a lamp-room. Far away on the western horizon dawn is chasing the last rear guard of night.

Four bells ! 6 a.m. !

My day has begun.

CHAPTER XIII

ALL HANDS ON DECK

For twenty to twenty-five days after leaving Iquique, whilst sailing somewhere about ten to fifteen degrees south of the line—I do not know the exact geographical point, for the true ship's position is a secret kept zealously aft—we sailed into feather calm weather.

That our skipper could foretell climatic conditions better than the barometer—at least better than one of two we carried—was well known. I have seen him with wine-tainted breath addressing that erratic barometer and vehemently calling it a barefaced liar ! And then he would perhaps release it suddenly from its cabin fixings, rush with it up the companion, and holding it out in a downpour of rain, rap out : “ Shucks ! There now ! Yew say ‘ Set fair ’ ! Look at it ! Look at it and see for yourself—yew goldarned barefaced liar ! ”

But this day, just three days after the calm, both our barometers began to drop, then to rise, then to drop again, as if unable to indicate where the truth lay. The mercury seemed as though it depended from a stretch of elastic.

Then later on in the afternoon, whilst replacing the sidelights after trimming, I began to notice a slow and heavy, and oily swell developing. Strange to say, no breeze which then blew, or even previously, could possibly have caused it ! Mystification engendered my interest ; for here was an effect without, to me, any apparent cause. And logically, effect without cause cannot be.

Presently, as if springing from nowhere, a stiff, gusty, breeze came up. . . . Yes, from the south-east. And with it came up our Old Man from the cabin below.

He rubbed his eyes. He had been sound asleep.

He now stepped to the compass, threw a glance at the royals, and another over the tumbling sea. He rubbed his eyes again, as if he failed to comprehend what he saw.

Then suddenly taking in the poop he beetled his eyebrows, and addressing the kicking mate he began to vitriolically curse him ! He called him the "damndest" sailor that ever slouched across a deck, in fact, every inglorious epithet he could think of, winding up with : "For two cents, mister, I'd put yer darned carcass in irons for unnecessarily endangering my ship !"

What was the matter ? . . . I could not comprehend. . . . Things seemed all right. Years after, I often wondered whether that blue nose mate harboured a hateful design in his heart, and a vile determination to carry it out. An hour or two's delay just then, and that ship would have been lost, and everyone in it.

A moment afterwards the skipper darted down into the cabin ; and immediately reappeared with an expression upon his face bespeaking utter determination and coolness ; his whole being that of a man in full command, and about to exercise it.

"All hands on deck ! . . . Clew up yer royals, and t'gan'sls ! Haul up yer mains'l, and git 'em furled as quick as yew kain. . . . Spring for your lives, men—if yew reckon on a dry burial !—fix the relieving tackle to steering gear."

I stared open-mouthed.

"Mister," he continued, addressing the mate, "we'll bring her on to the port tack." He spat out these words.

I watched the men racing for the shrouds, and laying along the yards. Spiders !

Great Scot ! what could it all mean ?

"Sho-rty, go down and see how the barometers are working and report. . . . Tell Sonny to lay below !"

At length I reported : "Barometer's fallen three-tenths and inclined to still fall, sir."

The skipper nodded without looking at me ; but I think I heard him mutter something like : 'H'm—ten points.'

Before disappearing below again, I noticed a dense black sky advancing. It looked as though a great planet as large as the earth itself had bumped into it, leaving a horrifying black and purple bruise.

And night was upon us.

As soon as the vessel was "hove to" on the port tack—and never had it been done so quickly before on that ship—I noticed, now the ship lay without speed, but wallowing, that the skipper took his stand near the binnacle and the wheel ; and began to study the direction of the wind—now blowing very fresh from south-east and veering towards south.

At the same time some of the hands were rigging a weather cloth in the mizzen and jigger rigging.

Over the side an ugly-looking, confused and lumpy sea—and still rising mysteriously ! The effect was much greater than the cause—to me. We were, indeed, now often shipping heavy water.

I failed utterly to comprehend the nautical position. Beaten to a frazzle, I entered the cabin to watch the barometer with that eerie prescient feeling that explains itself in "Coming events cast their shadows before."

After some time I turned to report that the barometer had fallen six tenths of an inch, and still falling, when, suddenly I found the skipper at my elbow. At this moment the ship was pitching heavily. Outside evidently ran a very high and turbulent sea.

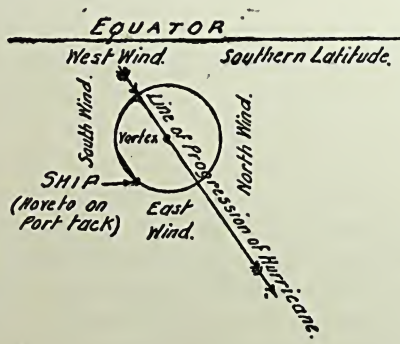
I now left the cabin to attend to the binnacle lights

(as usual not what they should be). From the poop I saw the vessel wallowing deeply, often with her lee rail well awash. But out deck ports worked well, and allowed much of the water to escape.

Returning dubiously below to chat with the apprehensive Sonny, I saw the skipper assiduously bending over the cabin table, and hastily describing a circle with a silver compass.

On the circle's periphery he marked the direction, and veering of the wind: S.E., shifting to S. Then through the centre of the circle he drew a long line parallel to those points.

Below is a copy of that hurricane diagram made by our Old Man, twenty-five years ago. Present-day captains, and captains of the old school, together with officers, will well understand it, and appreciate our serious position. And it may perhaps vividly recall to their minds similar, if not more desperate circumstances in the Bay of Bengal ; off the coasts of Japan ; the West Indies ; or the Southern Ocean.



CHAPTER XIV

IN THE CYCLONE'S GRIP

In the cabin the skipper suddenly sighed with relief, and looked around upon all his officers now with him.

"Right-hand semi-circle—thank God!" cried he; "and the line of progression is S.E.—mister," addressing the mate. "Her head is bearing west, and she's 'Hove to' on the port tack. . . . We'll rouse her!"

Ascending to the poop the skipper bellowed: "Hard up the helm! Square in the mainyard! Let her pay off till the wind is on the port quarter!"

I looked at him—every inch a sailor.

"We hev," said he to the officers, and two brass-borders near him, "to run darned slick and sharp before this lot coming! . . . She might do it! . . . If we kain't keep running with the wind on our port quarter we—waal—I guess we'll all of us in a bunch be landing on the golden shore before the noon watch to-morrow! . . . If she ain't from where she lies now in six hours our chance ain't that of a talla dog in Hell! . . . Sho-rty, below!" I followed him.

"Sho-rty, ever seen a cyclone ashore? Things that don't take back answers?" he asked as we entered the cabin.

I answered that I had seen the result of two—the worse one at St. Louis, in 1896.

"Waal, then, there is a sea cyclone coming to us right away! The devil is about to pass the goods right along to us; straight off the belt-end—mark that!—right direct from the centre of Hell itself—Thet's so!"

(Here then was the meaning of it all!)

"Where do hurricanes originate, sir?" I asked with all the condensed foolishness acquired in nineteen and a half years.

"Hell!"

Vague, geographically, I thought; but did not say so.

"They call these darned spiral wind things 'typhoons' off Japan; 'tornadoes' in the West Indies; 'hurricanes' in the Southern Ocean. All mean the same thing. All damn bad. Name different—that is all. These Southern Ocean ones spin to the right, clockwise; the Northern Ocean ones anti-clockwise. All damn bad! See Sonny ain't scared when you lay below during the music!"

I promised; though I began to think my belt might now be tightened with advantage.

The wind now on the quarter, and the vessel running before it, our decks canted at a fearsome angle, sending the lee rail well under.

The hands now shifted the weather cloth from the starboard mizzen rigging to the port quarter, fixing it to the awning stanchions to ease the helmsman from the full force of the wind, and that helmsman would have to either steer by the leech of a sail or, when dark, by the wind on his cheek! Compass too wild!

To use a land term, we were now "hopping it!" Her speed increased from ten to twelve knots perhaps. Her head felt inclined to swing to windward, but was firmly checked by our rigorous and careful helmsman—Leith Scotty.

And then followed the inevitable awful plunge into the smothering maelstrom of broken pyramidal water ahead, that deluged and buried all the lee rail a fathom deep.

The force of the wind was now so intense that one found it impossible to breathe when looking to windward. And one had to hold on to the rails, or anything staunch, for safety.

Once, standing near the skipper at the weather gangway, relashing a lifebelt, I saw him with eagle eye cast intermittently aloft, and hands fondling the pooprail, cry abstractedly: "Stick it, old candy! Stick it! Sti-auch, yew old hussy! . . . Don't strain so! . . . Now, then, hustle a mite more, and don't be so darned haughty! I'll ease yew after a while; but stick it now, old gal, for God's sake!" . . .

Then, as he noticed her streaming head in the distance rising giantlike and defiant in a great cascade of greenish-blue water, he would rap out: "Up! Up! M'beauty! Up! Up! Up to it, yer sassy old bird! . . . Let it all roll under—yew rusty old trollop!" . . .

He would then turn to the binnacle, steady himself with his hand on its top, and peer into it and watch the wildly swinging compass card.

Perhaps a sea at our back would threaten to engulf us: "Ah! Yew Jim Slicker! Guessed yew had gotten us right under yew, eh? Wall, yew ain't. This wind-jammer from little old San Francisco has some heels under her—ain't yew, sweetheart?" and the taffrail would receive a tender patting!

"Why, boys" (the quaking archangel, and the next youngest, but still more quaking apprentice, stood by—acting as draughtscreens, I believe, to the skipper when he strode from the protection of the weather cloth), "why, boys, I guess the redoubtable Captain McAusland, 'Pacific Mac' [a well-known and highly respected British sea captain roving the Pacific in the 'Nineties] in his beautiful full-rigged *Pythomene* could not beat *this* sailing. Reckon he'd call this fair weather! And would hang more canvas on her, down to an old petticoat, if he could find one aboard, and nothing else left to bend. Fine sailor!"

(I felt our skipper, behind the temporary weather cloth, was but speaking thus to infuse his own courage

into his young apprentices, and me. He belongs to the great men unknown.)

I was listening intently to the record of how this gallant British captain made an average run of two hundred and seventy four miles per day from Diego Suarazi (Madagascar) to Adelaide, when our skipper, with always one eye aloft and the other about him, whipped round with: "Sho-rt-y! lay aloft there, yew young devil, and fix thet gasket that's broken adrift on the mizzen t'gan yard!"

Aloft in howling weather like this! Fear it you may, yet face it you must—on a ship.

I sprang down the lee gangway on my way to the mizzen shrouds.

"Where to?" yelled that sailor from Baltimore as I passed him.

I told him.

"Blimy!" (a word he had picked up from our English second mate), "Blimy! Two hands for yourself, and your teeth for the ship! . . . This ain't flying-fish weather! . . . Take the lubber's hole. . . . Brought your umbrella! . . . It——"

At this moment a sudden green sea flopped mercilessly upon us from the starboard quarter, and swilled both of us, holus-bolus, like two matches, clean over the hatchway and spread-eagled us into the lee scuppers.

Fortunately, we felt none the worse except for a bruise or two, a barked shin, and a wetting that made us feel as cold as two fishes.

He grinned! (It was I who had the barked shin.)

Scrambling to my feet, I looked up from rubbing my shin and saw our British second mate clearing the blood of a forehead wound from his eyes. With the same sea he had been washed off his feet, and had struck a hatchway wedge.

The blood out of his eyes, he cried: "Haul again,

men ! What in bally 'ell ere ye spelling for—Haul ! Blast ye for lubbers ! Haul ! Rouse her ! ”

(They were tightening up the top-sail halyards, so as to lend a little support to the lower top-sail yard arm, which had been lashed to the upper one.)

I left them, and worked and dodged my way to the mizzen weather shrouds. Over the dead-eyes and up I went.

For the first time in my life I learned what it means to be fixed eight points from the centre path of a cyclone—at sea ! My God !

So tightly against the ratlines did the wind press me, that once I thought the breath had passed out of me.

Perhaps it had, temporarily ; for one ratline pressed my throat. Only a short lull and a love of life enabled me to go on.

And then I heard a sound ; much like the sharp, crack sound from a pistol. Something had gone.

At length I gained the lubber's hole in the futtock plate—through which lies the safest, though not the usual, way to get further aloft—and noticed as I did so that the t'gan'sl, my immediate object, had been blown to ribbons. The pistol shot sound I had heard denoted its first failure.

I found in the slings Aloha, the Kanaka, attending to the bunt of the crojeck which some minutes ago had blown adrift.

He shouted in my ear—and I could hardly hear him—that Old Man Smith was on the crojeck yard further along, the end he believed, and Ben at the quarter.

I found here the roll and pitch of the ship terrific. The masts swept through great arcs. But I had long since become used to all ship motions ; it was in the technicalities of a ship's parts and ship's working where lay my principal weakness.

And here on the futtock plate the wind—a million

imps fresh from some colian hell screamed in and about my ears.

And the darkness! the frightful darkness, that seemed almost a substance. Out of it belched roar upon roar, and screaming wisss-t upon wisss-t. . . . I felt afraid. . . . But I held tight.

In my ears sounded the rasp of giant humming and wailing of backstays strained to their limit which might, like a fiddle string, snap at any moment, and then . . . then . . . but I hoped not.

Occasionally the high modulated humming became drowned by the constant crescendo of whistling and hooting and shrieking of shrouds and lifts in agony.

From below belched up the awful creaking and straining sound of cambering top-s'l yards. And as the madly whirling wind tornadoed along, I caught now and then that uncanny buffeting, unnerving sound that springs and vibrates from a bellying tortured top-s'l.

Would the top-sails hold?

CHAPTER XV

A TRAGEDY IN THE DARK

In such frightful weather any kind of sails might fail. And a loose infuriated sail thrashing about in the dark, and whipping through all the points of the compass, until mastered, or blown to shreds, is a devil incarnate.

Standing as I was on the futtock plate at the top of the lower mast, I occasionally found the wind slack clean out of the lower top-sail. The cause for this, I eventually learned, proved a dual one—(1) the perforated sail, i.e., two five-inch diameter holes in line with the clews; and (2) the *seas running so high behind us*! So high indeed, perhaps a hundred feet or more, that they effectively blocked the wind from filling the sail—and our lower top-s'ls were at least seventy feet above the deck. The highest watery hills I have ever known.

I prepared to descend to the poop.

I remember I had arrived at a point about halfway down the mizzen rigging when it happened—pooped!

Leith Scotty told me afterwards that she lifted her broad stern gallantly and grandly over one huge sea, but before she could rise fully from the cavernous trough to the crest of the next towering and curling monster—a monster stung and gored forward by leagues upon leagues of mad tempest behind it—she was mercilessly over-ridden! The sea “Niagara-ed” upon, and over, the poop and flew for’ard!

I felt her stagger under the colossal blow. For a moment she seemed lifeless. From stern to stem was nothing but one mad whirling and swirling onrushing

sea. The ship was more than abrim. Neither poop nor forecastle could be seen ; although there was a good "loom" cast by water. The steeve of the bowsprit could not be distinguished ! I thought we had gone. It looked like it.

Fortunately, the men on deck had been ordered into the cabin by our far-sighted skipper, to protect their lives.

Sluggishly, she rose, then rapidly ; just in time to raise her stern almost harmlessly over another engulfing deluge. Yet this lot cataracted over the deck as far as the foremast.

From my position in the mizzen rigging, after a moment or two, I could just discern amid the loom of the foam, which sheds a certain light, and the reflection of the high curling white crests that relentlessly followed us, three black balls—the heads of three men at the wheel rising as she lifted.

If at the moment of the pooping fear had found place in the hearts of the men at the wheel, and they had "let go," we should all have been lost ; for she would have run right up into the wind, with the result that in a moment the sails would have been in ribbons and the ship would have been dismasted—an ungovernable wreck in a hurricane ! A babe amid hungry tigers !

But that proved not to be. The wheel stoutly held meant, not only salvation from the danger described, but from an immediate washing overboard ; or a dashing of brains out against the poop fore-rail, or the iron sides of the monkey-poop.

They held on.

(Trust old Leith Scotty for holding on to anything once it got in his hands !)

When the water cleared and the decks could be partly seen and deciphered little by little—my ! Our longboat, twenty-two feet above deck, had disappeared

from the davits ! Another boat, still hanging on its davits, appeared like a broken skeleton hanging and stretched between a double gibbet. Nine or ten feet of taffrail had also passed into the possession of Davy Jones.

The cook's galley had been swept clean, and all deck ropes had become streamers, snakes, and serpents, some trailing and fretting overboard, while others, though still on their belaying-pins, meandered every-how over the sodden decks.

Mrs. Cape Horn and family had all perished ! So, too, our chickens, together with that proud rooster that used to crow so valiantly in the early mornings.

A kennel lashed to the top of the after hatchway had evidently floated over the rail without touching anything. The pedigree hounds, consigned to the Sydney Kennel Club—mercifully and thoughtfully released by some knowing Jack among us before the hurricane reached its height—were eventually found all huddled together quite safe, but shivering, wet, and limp, under the lowest and farthest for'ard of the forecastle bunks. Poor things !

Fortunately, some of the crew were aloft at the time, and the remainder in the cabin. As for me, I made my way further up the rigging. Safer there.

I felt the good ship battling her way west—our only safe outlet. By that exit alone could she throw off the relentless tormentors that pursued her. She rose, and towered, and fell ; she breasted and ran nimbly over and among her gigantic obstacles, just like a palmetted stag, running for life. Oppressed closely, buffeted openly, battered repeatedly, onward she flew to the west . . . west . . . west.

Some ships are such sports. No wonder sailors worship some ships !

At length, as I returned up the rigging, I found myself again in the slings of the croeck (cross-jack). And here on the croeck yard the final tragedy occurred.

The kicking mate, finding the captain absent from the poop a moment—probably he had rushed down to Sonny to cherish and comfort him after the great pooping—bellowed via the megaphone an order to Old Man Smith on the lee arm of the crojeck yard.

Due to the mate's inarticulation and the hurricane noise, Old Man Smith failed to comprehend. Indeed, at the moment, the old shellback was doing his very utmost to set adrift a gasket that had not only fouled, but had become almost hopelessly entwined in the clew garnet, thus effectively preventing the sail that had become partly adrift from being clewed up and furled.

Whether the mate totally misconceived the situation up there, or whether some dark unfathomable ulterior motive suddenly awakened, and shaped its ugly self in that great ill-shaped head of his, I cannot say; but he left the poop abruptly—an action no mate but a Nova Scotian Blue Nose would descend to do—and scrambled into the mizzen shrouds, delaying himself a moment to snatch something out of the fiferail.

He rose into the slings near where I stood on the futtock plate holding on to the top-mast rigging amid the dire howl of everything. This mate was about to lay along the yard when a belaying-pin, which he had stuck conveniently into his pocket or belt, and which protruded some inches, caught in my shirt. With an oath and a ghastly curse he wrenched himself free, and sprang upon the crojeck yard, laying along the foot-rope like a gigantic spider.

I followed him. . . that belaying-pin ! . . . Why !

He passed Ben fifteen feet along the crojeck, and half-way to Old Man Smith, shouting something as he dodged round on the footrope which I did not catch.

I reached Ben and yelled in his ear : " Belaying-pin in mate's hip pocket ! "

Ben yelled into mine : " Mate bawled into my ear, ' I'll send *you* to hell in a moment ! ' "

And with that Ben turned from me and lay after that mate. (Weeks at sea, and often aloft, had made the nimble Ben ship familiar.)

He felt, so he subsequently confided to me, that " something was going to happen."

And there, in the mad whirl of the wind, the almost limitless swing of the ship, the intense darkness, and the gigantic roar and howl, and hiss of the tremendous seas below, it did. Actually I did not see the preliminaries, or final deed, because the darkness prevented me, although I clung to the jack-rail but a yard or so away. But what I subsequently gathered is screened indelibly upon my mind thus :

It appears that as soon as the mate reached Old Man Smith, instead of helping him to free the gasket from the clew garnet he began to beat in the poor old man's face with the heaviest of fistic blows.

Ben, now reaching them, could hear what was taking place, and his lion nature forbade it. And, simultaneously, poor Old Man Smith, not possessing the strength and clutch of a younger man, was about to let go his hold when Ben 'let drive' !

In great privacy at Sydney, Ben confided to me that he struck him one blow with all his might. " I expected a return with that belaying-pin ; but it did not come. I struck a rapid blow again, as heavy as the other, and—landed in air ! There was no mate ! "

" My first and only blow was but a chance one. I could see nothing. Whether I struck him behind the ear, or on the ' point,' I cannot say—I believe behind and just under the ear, and—that is fatal !

" I felt along the jackrail to feel for his hands, not knowing but that he may be playing ' possum,' or up to some hellish trick—he knowing ship's tricks better than

I, a landsman ; but only Old Smith's hands trembling, and covered with blood, did I find.

"After a while, Old Man Smith was able to tell me that the mate had suddenly let go his hold on the jackrail, and that he thought him—insane !"

Thus, there, into the hideous howling darkness that mate had for ever disappeared, hurtling like a shot eagle from a crag into the gigantic raging waters below.

"He went," concluded Ben, without remorse, "to where he belonged from his birth !"

I believe him. He may have been insane. What Blue Nose mate is not ? Yet, as a rule, they are excellent—often super-excellent—sailors.

I cautioned Ben and Old Man Smith to remain for ever silent. "Legally, Ben, I guess it is murder ; morally it is good riddance."

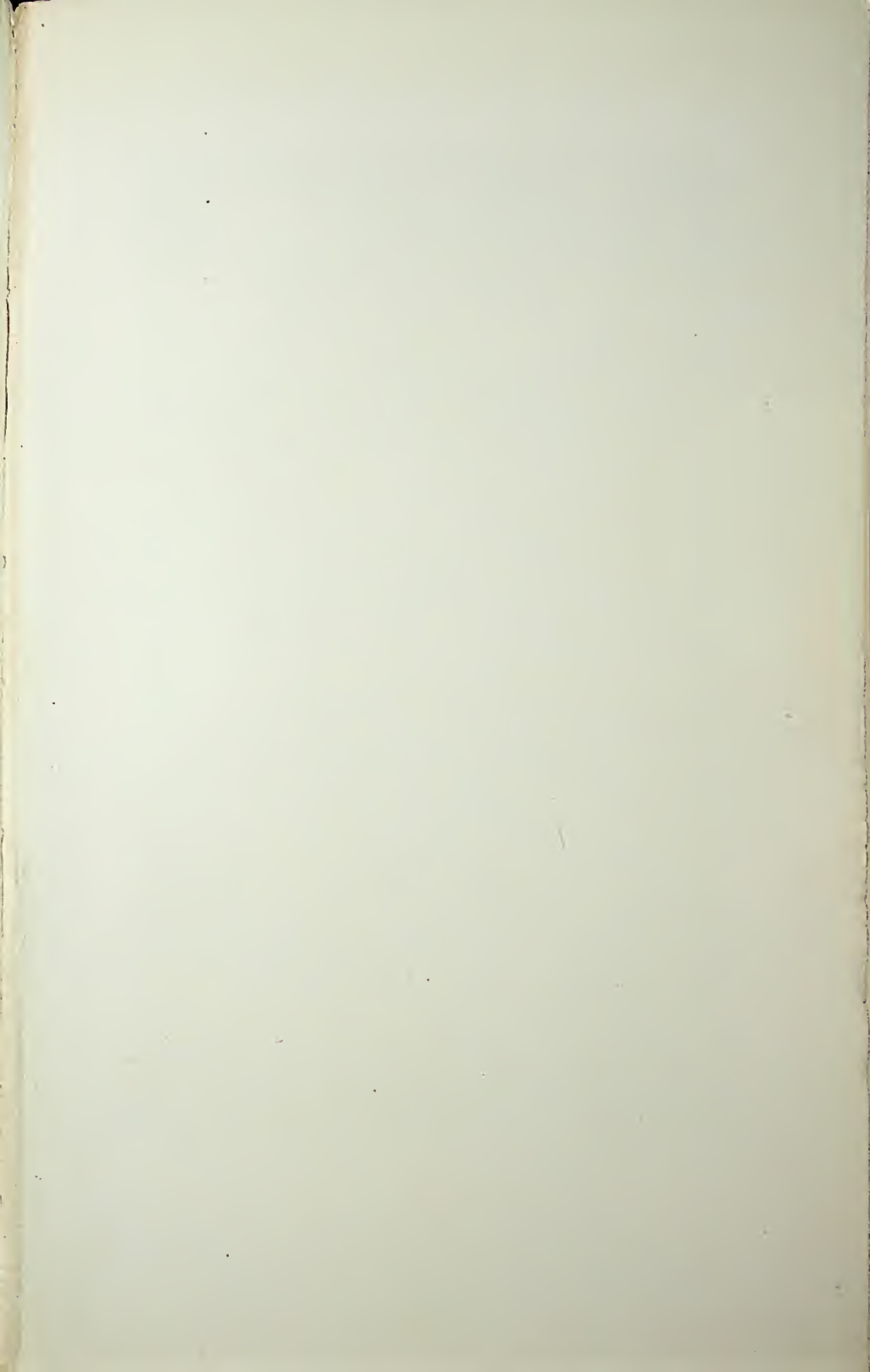
Ben nodded.

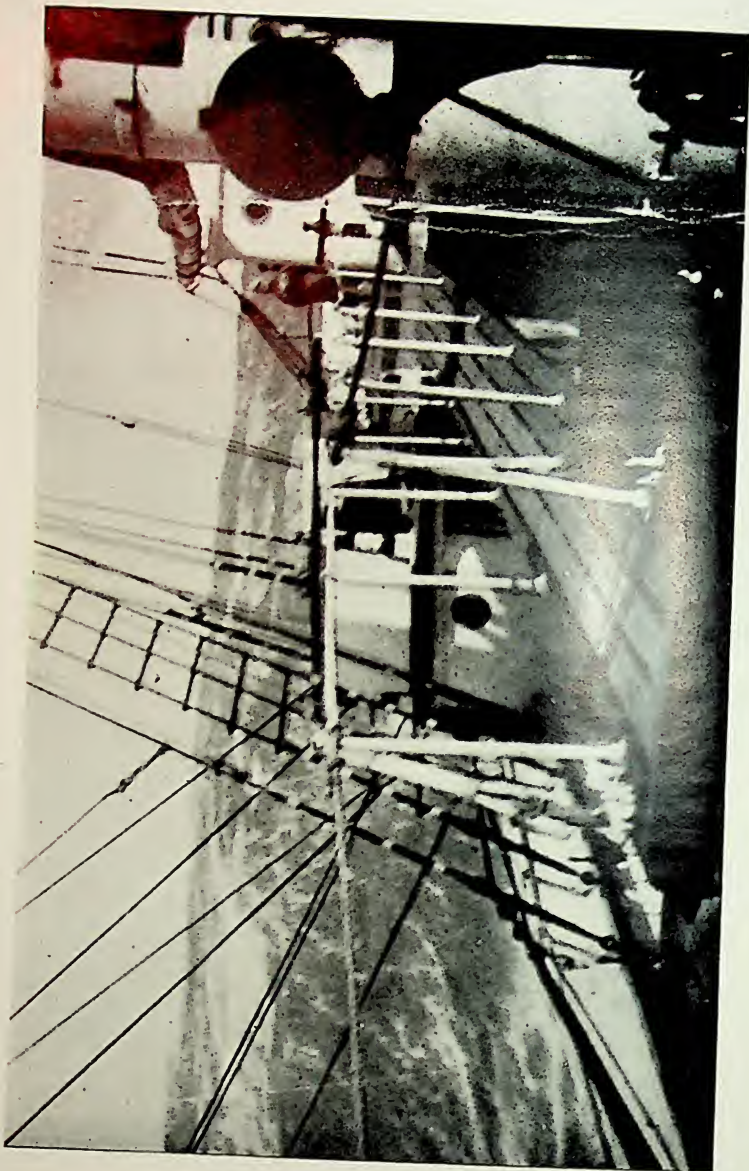
Nobody on board, or elsewhere for that matter, ever discovered, or even suspected the secret ; and it happened twenty-five years ago. Old Man Smith is long dead ; Ben, too, perhaps.

All on board surmised, due to a second pooping—though nothing comparable with the first—which we suffered whilst the mate was tearing up the mizzen rigging in the dense darkness, that he had been caught whilst chancing the deck passage, as hundreds of sailors had been caught before, and had paid the supreme penalty of circumstance.

The utmost sympathy I ever heard expressed in that ship concerning him was : "May he roast for ever !"

I delete the sailor's adjective and substantive.





" THE SEAS WERE STILL FOAMY AND LUMPY "

CHAPTER XVI

THE SCALPING OF BEN

At last, running at the rate of two hundred and eighty-six sea miles in twenty-four hours, we dodged out of the path of the hurricane, though the seas were still foamy and lumpy, and still paid sullen visits aboard occasionally. Our good barometer, steadily rising, betokened good things to come. Even the other one—that “shameless doggone liar”—was turning respectable, but still treated truth rather recklessly.

The ship, similar to another ship in our offing—an “also ran”—still staggered, paused, lurched, and reeled unexpectedly, but not—to a sailor—in a discomforting manner; rather like a duck in a wind-swept pool which, having repeatedly dived, had come up finally, and had commenced to shake herself together again, and to preen her ruffled feathers preparatory to leading a more peaceful and a more surface-scanning existence.

But it was during one of these unexpected, wild lurchings of the vessel that Ben “happened his extraordinary accident”—an accident which presented an excellent chance to our skipper to both exercise and enhance his surgical “skill.”

Ben, having finished his two-hour ‘trick’ (duty) at the wheel, had just handed it over to his successor, when a lumpy sea suddenly rushed and swelled under our starboard counter, combining with an incidental heavy rolling to port.

Ben fell forward headlong. The upper part of his forehead struck the bare sharp edge of a circular biscuit tin which, for the convenience of the helmsman, we kept near the wheel, but just now, owing to the general condition of things, was spilling-full of salt water.

Ben failed to rise !

Soon one or two sprang towards him and lifted him. . . . His head was bleeding profusely and his hair in front had disappeared !

"Haul him below to the cabin," cried our Old Man with what I thought a strong tinge of clamorous eagerness. He scented a case. And down our narrow companion-way Ben was conveyed, insensible.

Soon after this, when taking up my scholastic duties with Sonny in the cabin, I saw the skipper, amid a formidable array of blue and red bottles, rag and cotton wool, busily, but delightedly, engaged in staunching the blood-flow.

Ben was still insensible.

"Sho-rt'y ! Go up on the poop and see if you can find this man's hair !"

I went. But for some time I failed to find that elusive patch of hair and scalp. "Washed overboard," I conjectured. And yet no seas were now coming aboard the poop.

But at last my eager eyes inadvertently alighted upon a slowly revolving tuft of yellowish hair floating like a toy island in the biscuit tin. It was it !

Ben had been correctly scalped by an inoffensive biscuit tin ! No Indians, no tomahawks, no feathers, no fuss. All unromantic.

I nipped and carried the brine-soaked thing below. How the skipper smiled ! "Holy Gee !" cried he, beside himself with a bulging delight. And he reached forward eagerly to snatch the hairy treasure. (I felt a trifle sick myself.)

For days no one saw Ben. Too great a privilege ! The captain kept him most preciously hidden in the late mate's berth. Evidently he appreciated to the full this rare and valuable case.

From the second mate I gathered in due course the

curious and astounding fact that our skipper had "restuck," with great skill, that galavanting tuft. Further, had actually *sewn* it down! (Good thing, I thought, our skipper had not taken to joinery as a hobby and had become fond of nails.) And Ben, I was told, was alive—and lively! Well, well, such is the triumphant power of surgery at sea.

Thus, in a lurid, new and emboldened light did our skipper arise to an extraordinary height in the estimation of his officers and men. All I wished was that my friend Ben would arise to the modest height of the deck.

One day this wish was granted to me. As he clambered slowly up the companion I caught sight of him. I rushed forward. . . . He looked somewhat pale and wan. He smiled at me.

But somehow, quite unaccountably at the moment, his head appeared to me most peculiar. . . . What could it be? . . . I stared and stared at him as he rose up the companion and made his way across the poop to the deck. What the deuce was it that made him look so queer? . . . My God! I hit it:

The patch of hair and scalp had been sewn the wrong way on—back foremost!

To this day I can remember him. Always of melancholy visage, but now advanced into downright sheepishness!

And I suppose he must look so to this day, unless he is bald.

But what would Violette say? And after her astonishment had expressed itself, what would Ben say? And, then, more important still, after silent review together, what would they both say? Ben would look a funny husband. Friends might view him hopefully; others with alarm; children might run to their mothers; and dogs to or at Ben. Who could tell?

The answer lay at Sydney, Australia.

"Yes," he used to say to me when referring to his extraordinary whimsical appearance. "Yes, H.P.B., my kids and baby will never tire of pulling that lock of hair and laughing. Ours will be a happy home."

About this time the Old Man ordered Chips aloft, with instructions to nail a silver dollar to the fore topmast—our lower mast was of steel—this dollar to become the property of the first man to espy a landfall—Australia.

Then we were within a day or two of land! No necessity to drive any man to a job now; he waited on the very breath of the order.

The next day at dawn that dollar passed comfortably into the possession of Smith. He must have been possessed of eyes embracing searchlight power. Some said keeping his eyes "peeled" on his many wives had made him so!

Some hours later our Sydney pilot, a "chum" six feet four inches and "bearded like the pard," scrambled up our rope ladder and landed aboard; attended soon after by a fussy little rusty tug off the Heads.

Inside the historic Heads we lay at the quarantine station until presently a doctor came aboard. I overheard him remark that measles were then rampant in Sydney—the best measles; one measle apiece for everybody. The doctor was a humorist I guess.

After a while he came to the forecabin and asked especially for Ben. Probably the captain had mentioned the "case," for he accompanied him. After closely inspecting Ben's head he turned suddenly to our Old Man and said: "Hell, man! you've put in enough stitches to sew a shirt together!" And then turning to Ben remarked: "My man, I see by your smile that you don't mind the result. No one else need. And, believe me, the captain here has made a good *seamanlike* job of it!"

He had.

Upon being released from quarantine we made fast to

a harbour buoy near the old colonial clipper ship—the *Sobroan*. Then, and perhaps even now, used as a reformatory for the Australian "throw-outs." A wonderful ship fallen low. "Only birds could pass her," so said her old skipper proudly.

Hardly had we made fast—forty-nine days from leaving Iquique—before many real old shellbacks clambered desperately on board from hired boats; offering, with much earnestness and eagerness, to work their passage to San Francisco free gratis!

No need for "shanghaieing" here evidently. What a change do gold-booms make. The Klondyke gold-boom proved no exception.

In these extraordinary circumstances our Old Man doubtless desired nothing better than that our present more or less nondescript crew would run (desert) *en bloc*! A new, smart, and well-experienced crew to work the ship across the Pacific to the green waters of San Francisco Bay all for nothing silhouetted a matter not to be in any way despised. A sea captain must live. Ships must be worked as economically as possible. Peas bloom but once a year. Yes, our men therefore would be worked desperately hard in port and given no shore leave; but provided with ample opportunity (covertly) to indulge in a final French leave or to become acquainted with the wheedling, cigar-offering, shoke-giving shore crimps. And that colonial beer known as "chokee," "shokee," and "shoke" plays the very devil with sailors.

As expected and wished for, crimps and inclination won. They disappeared in twos and threes. They left nothing behind except curses—as usual. A few remained by the good old ship—about five or six out of a crew of twenty-six! Few men stay long in a yankee ship anyway. The food may be good, but the work is endless, and discipline often brutal.

Our men deserted. No wonder the skippers of the old

school owned rows of houses, and long flag-staffs. *But not to-day !*

At length we were found a berth alongside Circular Quay, just astern of the *Mythomene*.

That evening, I obtained leave to go ashore. Ben took his. Moreover, the Old Man, seeing I had eaten all my "dead horse," gave me some money, although I was not entitled to any until the voyage was over at San Francisco.

Ben and I, once free of the ship, strolled behind some cargo on the quay and sized up our finance. Between us we had ten dollars given by Senn, and five dollars given me by the skipper.

We decided on a cab—a hansom. In George Street we picked one up and directed it to Violette's address.

It tore through the traffic—those Sydney cabs can fly—and eventually landed a white and trembling Ben at the doors of a smart private hotel. All the journey hither Ben had said nothing. Had looked as white as a maggot. His whole life-essence had seemed concentrated in his finger-tips that had incessantly drummed on the window ledge.

Out of the cab he bounced. I followed. Breathless almost, he inquired of the six foot of clerk at the hotel office for the French-Canadian family and Violette.

She was not there !

Worse ! We learned from the clerk that the Canadian and his family, with Violette, upon the receipt of a long and repulsively blue official-looking envelope, had immediately prepared to leave for the U.S.A. They had "sailed yesterday, chum !"

"Great God !" cried distracted Ben almost pitifully, "after all I hev gone through too ! . . . Well, friend," said he, turning to me at last and speaking in sad resigned tones, yet with firm mouth : "I am for America too. . . . Back again."

I then suggested we pay a visit to the agents of the mail boat, to ascertain her route, final port, etc.

"It is still early evening, Ben, and the shipping office may not be closed," said I hopefully.

Ben closed with the suggestion. "Hiram, we'll make a straight coat-tail for that office," and out we rushed.

And there fortune favoured us—Ben in particular.

We gathered that the mail boat had sailed the day before ; but due to a defective casting at the base of the steering gear had put back to harbour to refit a new one. The engineering shops had quickly done their job, and the boat was getting ready to sail, in fact may have started !

"About to sail now—at this minute ?" cried Ben, electrified into sudden life. "Man, where is the ship lying—the name of the quay—quick !"

"She lies at the Circular Quay East—first turning on the left after turning the corner outside, sir," calmly answered a slow exasperating assistant. "We think, sir——"

But Ben and I had bolted. Ben dashed ahead of me like a stag pursued. He flashed around a corner of George Street just as I stumbled headlong over a perambulator and negro auntie coming out of a shop. The incident much delayed me.

And that was the last I ever saw of Ben !

What eventually happened to dear Old Ben lies in the land of conjecture. He doubtless caught the boat—else he would have returned to our ship. But who paid his passage ? Violette or her rich Canadian employer ? Or did he work his passage ? or made he a "pier-head jump ?" Finally, did he marry his "little paradise of five feet three ?" And what of the merry kiddies and jubilant baby ? And that irresistible tuft of hair ? All these questions I cannot answer. I dearly wish I could.

In a novel one can ; but in true life the answers to many of life's problems are often left unfinished and ungiven in this world.

CHAPTER XVII

OMENS AND DEATH

THE STRANGE DEATH OF OLD MAN SMITH

We had left Newcastle Heads, Australia, about forty days, loaded with coal for Speckle's Wharf, San Francisco. Fiji and its sunny group of palm-clad islands had been left on our port quarter seven days ago.

A glaring Pacific sun poured down its white-hot rays from the great azure dome aloft upon the holystoned decks and white wings of the *General Gordon*. All a limitless blue above and around. We, a speck. A good commercial breeze off our starboard quarter that gently stretched every stitch fore and aft, and down from royals to courses, blew us profitably along on our north-easterly course.

The port-watch laboured on deck—at nothing. Nothing was there to do, save scrape excellent rust from the anchor chains or scour already brilliant paintwork. But the officer of the watch was not “a hazer.” It was all left to the sun. The men crept into, and lurked in, shady places. Our two new pigs grunted.

Inside the hard, dull-painted, reverberating fore-castle, in a lower starboard bunk, lay Old Man Smith, very still. For a week he had lain thus. Gaunt of face he looked, and his labouring breath came short. I noticed a greyish tinge pervading gradually the deep-sea tan of his breast and neck, which seemed strange and unnatural to a man who had always been as brown as mahogany—and as tough.

He seemed to-day to be very old. And on him sometimes rested that strange inward stillness that old people

exhibit occasionally in their faces when climbing slowly up that last hill of life. His eyes would sometimes open to mere slits, as if peering through a chink in the shutters of time, and so steadfastly fix themselves that the sound of hilly swells thumping against our bows outside never seemed to either divert or disturb them.

So he lay, as I left him for the open deck, half in this world and half in the other.

"I guess it's signcoop," hazarded the sailor from Baltimore, whom I met at the main fife-rail, nodding ominously towards the forecastle.

But I did not diagnose it as syncope: for syncope, I understood, was dreadfully sudden in its action. Here was delay. I thought rather it meant senile decay, greatly accelerated, maybe, by that cruel, murderous onslaught on the crojeck during that wild night below the line, when Ben sent our late kicking mate to final moorings somewhere in the Great Beyond. Perhaps, too, maybe, excessive sea toil and hardship had shortened his years. Anyway, from the night of that hideous encounter aloft, the Old Man Smith never seemed the same—physically.

"I will take another look at him after trimming the lamps," I answered, for the skipper had allotted to me the duty of 'keeping an eye on the sick man.' "Attend to his wants, Sho-rty," he had said; "he ain't going to be long aboard."

Returning after a while I bent over his bunk. He seemed asleep, but presently as I was about to move away he opened wide those deep blue eyes of his—but in a very tired sort of way. Then—

"Say, bo' . . . fetch—fetch me a drink, Sho-rty, will yew?" he murmured.

I went and obtained for him a good long drink from the second mate, who guarded the keys of our fresh water tanks most zealously. But he liked Smith.

"Sho-rty," said the old man feebly, as he tried to turn

on his elbow to drink, "Sho-rty, I'm goin' to my missus !"

With that I bent my eyebrows and stared down upon him. . . "Delirious," I thought.

"Yes, I'm goin' to my old gal ! I——"

"Which one ?" broke in somewhat bluntly and inconsiderately the sailor from Baltimore, who now had joined me.

I felt his remark out of place. It jarred. But he meant no harm. He could not comprehend the present circumstances.

"Why, say. . . . You Baltimore cuss . . ." answered the old man slowly, with just a flicker of his old-time animation returning to his eyes, "there jest only was ever one for me . . . my very first missus."

He turned his eyes to me. "Sho-rty," he added, "she drowned coming out to join me in Australy during the gold rush—that was in—in—in——" and he left it at that.

"You'll soon be hauling on the main-brace again when we fetch her to 'Frisco latitudes !" put in another man called Cherry, one of the new sailor men, a "gold rusher," and Englishman, who had joined us at Sydney. "Aye, 'lee fore-brace !' comes the call, and you'll jump to it."

"No more main-brace, or lee fore-brace, for me again, son," returned the old man deeply. "I guess I go along soon now to my missus. I sure feel it ; I know it ! . . . When this barque reaches the spot where the old '*Ercules* foundered—a hurricane I guess—I shall jest join my missus. . . . I kaint figure on the spot exactly, but this ship is sure going back over the same course the old '*Ercules* took, and will sure find it all right. . . . I know !"

In dead silence we listened to him. We said nothing when he hesitated—as he often did. His manner somehow seemed to grow on us and to preclude all whispering colloquy.

"T'other old gal o' mine at San Diego, with timber

fixings, is provided fur—a good soul she!—curious. . . .” (And here he hesitated long; and continually tried to wipe his heavy-eyebrowed eyes, as if struggling to clear a mental horizon.)

Then, abruptly, his hooked fingers, with their broken nails, clutched convulsively the blanket, and he bubbled out disjointed sentences quite unconnected in meaning with each other!

A moment or two later, as his body suddenly writhed, he burst out with: “I ain’t goin’ to mutiny! ’Taint—say! What’s, what’s thet long white—my God!—what is thet!—Take it away! away! kill it! It’s stopping me! Take boyees thet awful thing awa-a-y. Catch.”

And the old man amid pitiful and heartrending supplications that trailed into long, sad wails, after the manner of those from some affrighted woman pleading with some relentless brute for her honour, suddenly rose from his bunk, held a moment, then fell back exhausted.

Great beads of perspiration burst out from the matted white hair upon his forehead. We dropped back and stared dumbfounded. . . .

“Delirious,” said Cherry simply.

“Tappy,” murmured Baltimore solemnly.

“Did yew notice how his face took on a kind’r young look as he mentioned his first wife?” asked Baltimore of Cherry intently; following it with: “Eh, yeu! Stop yewr b—row! (The carpenter was sawing noisily a piece of wood in our vicinity.)

The noise stopped.

“Aye, I did. . . . All the real old ’uns die that way if they ’av ’ad any romance; it all comes back to ’em wallop like in the end. . . . Seed a few old ’uns die at sea, I ’av; but never seed one go sudden, stark, staring delirious like this rickety old ’un—seems to see summat

awful, don't he? Wonder what the 'ell he sees. . . .
Beats I, and——"

"Beats me to a damn frazzle," broke in Baltimore, looking abjectly nonplussed. "Makes yew feel creepy. . . . I dreamt a crazy dream last night, I——"

But I made my way aft to inform the skipper of the sudden turn of events.

Passing the fore port corner of the deck-house on my way, I was accosted with—

"Guess he ain't ready yit for me?" . . . The voice was that of Sails. He was looking up from a bolt of canvas upon which he knelt lining out the roach for a new fore-royal.

"Ain't ready, yit, eh? . . . A little early p'raps. . . . Stitch me fore and aft if I sure didn't think he reckoned on comin' to final moorings at San Diego, under a flower-bed—strike me dippy if I didn't. Don't like flower-beds—wormy—enough weevils on board without——"

But I felt disinclined to pursue the subject in that strain. This man, our sail-maker, would have presently a duty to perform. Curiously, he fancied the gruesome task. It would be he who would wrap up the body of Old Man Smith in sail-cloth, stitch it securely, with its enclosure of a length of junk chain or other weight to sink the body, and place it upon the main hatches ready to be committed to the deep.

He "fancied" his temporary position of prominence, did Sails. Apparently, he belonged, psychologically, to those ultra-strange people who perversely enjoy the hideous notoriety of being publicly hanged. I left him muttering something about burial at sea being "fine and healthy."

As I drew aft, I noticed some little commotion on the poop. The second mate and two or three brassbounders were excitedly pointing out to the skipper something that they saw astern of us. I joined them and gazed over the taffrail—a shark!

Said the second mate as he stopped in the act of throwing a missile at it: "Blimy! He ain't got his pilot fish in front of him to point out his prey! . . . Darned strange. . . . Never seen a shark down in these latitudes before swimming about without his pilot fish—except old Polaris Jack in New Zealand waters, now three thousand miles sow' west of us. . . . Seen him long?" he asked, turning to the helms-man.

"Came here two hours ago, sir. . . . Came in from the norr'ard. . . . Guess he's waiting for Old Man Smith."

"To hell, man! I——"

But he walked away. The sea is a strange place. Strange things happen in it and upon it. He knew this. Was he, too, superstitious, I wonder?

Next day, and all day, the brute still swam unswervingly and unfalteringly in our wake. And the breeze having died down to catspaws, the apprentices in the second dog-watch took to throwing at it all kinds of hard odds and ends.

But the only effect of the bombardment was to make it either alter its course slightly, or to send it below for a few moments—always to rise again.

Once the archangel threw two bits of a broken snatch-block at it, for which action he was diplomatically admonished astern, and tritely informed by the mate—who privately and profitably stored the ship's junk—that: "There was no damned use in throwing the ship at it."

After this the apprentices threw words—wild and profane. But the shark, out of the shadows cast astern by the sails, took no notice, and would presently reveal himself, and resolutely take up in the open his ceaseless watch. Always alert; always—if undisturbed—the same distance astern. Once or twice I dreamed of that black triangular dorsal fin, ever cleaving the waters in our wake; so much had I watched it, and so much had I contemplated upon it.

In normal conditions, with the weather as it then stood, a serious attempt would have been organised to catch this impish brute; but the skipper did not wish to impair the serene smartness of holystoned decks and glistening paint and brasswork by the unavoidable mess caused by the dispatch on board of a floundering shark.

So things remained. "It will go away in a day or two," said the skipper resignedly. And the helmsman suddenly looked grimly into the compass. He kept his thoughts to himself.

But it did *not* "go away in a day or two." Apparently, it felt no desire to do so. It remained until even the modern hands were beginning to whisper strangely.

And, do what we would, that loathsome denizen of the deep, following the ship by day and by night, vastly increased the gloom of the superstitious. Some of the old-timers and believers in dreams and such-like whispered solemnly that there might be more than Old Man Smith in the occurrence.

Always something happened if a shark "kep' follerin' a ship"—a hurricane perhaps, "no knowin'," and all hands lost. Dreams of beautiful women, a horse, or muddy water "We'n't near as bad." Some would as soon see the ship's cat leap over the fluke of the port anchor, or catch a glimpse of the phantom ship.

Indeed, the ghoulish persistency of our relentless follower began at last to tell even on the more modern minded of our crew. Deep down in all of us there is superstition. With these newer men it began to rise. They recalled strange events.

But not a word of all this reached the ears of the dying man. We as a crew strove, and succeeded, in keeping him in entire ignorance of the blood-curdling monster astern; and also, under a praiseworthy guise of bonhomie, the spell and its import that was rapidly enveloping all hands.

Battling in dire delirium, Old Man Smith would often shriek aloud in nerve-wracking wails, prayers and beseechings, until the forecastle echoed with: "Take that 'ellish thing away!"

"For the love of Holy Mary," he would cry in demented half prayer and half entreaty, "drive y'r knives into it! . . . Why kaint I move?"

At such moments one felt an impasse had been reached.

But in his normal moments he seemed oblivious of all this, and would chat to me quietly, and in a familiar, homely manner, of his love for his first wife, and how, when the ship should reach the exact spot where she was drowned, he would pass down to her "for ever and for ever."

"T'so, Sho-rty," he would add conclusively. . . . Then once, with a great light in his eye, he added: "Be assured, Sho-rty, she'll greet this worn out old shell-back with a smile—jest as she used to do forty years ago."

I nodded. It was all very strange.

And so two more days and nights passed. On the second night Smith seemed much worse. At times his delirium made him hideous to behold. His entreaties could be heard in the stillness of the tropic night as far as the poop. I often closed the forecastle doors to enable most of the hands, who, owing to the equatorial heat, were sleeping out on deck, to enjoy their rest undisturbed.

Returning once from shutting the doors I found, by the dull aid of the anchor-light that swung in the fore-castle, poor Smith with wild fright-filled eyes—eyes that bulged in horror from their sockets. "His mouth! His mouth!" he gasped, hoarsely.

He then sank far back into his bunk shuddering, cowering and babbling until I thought he must surely die immediately from very weakness and terror.

So much had this wild and pitiful suffering this night affected the crew that, next morning, they marched aft in a body and respectfully requested the skipper to institute some serious attempt to rid the ship of our ghastly follower.

The skipper, having already heard of the ravings (from me), now gave the matter serious consideration. Perhaps he thought as they, that this proposed capturing and killing was the only way after all to cure the dying man of his delirium.

His own prized panaceas, No 8 and No. 13, he knew to be useless here. No ! That grim monster in our wake must be laid low to effect a cure.

Was the skipper superstitious ? I think so. (What old sea dog of *his* school is not ?) But he showed not a sign of his beliefs.

Having heard the men, he glanced around and upon the serenity of his holystoned decks, and upon the crude, deep brown anxious faces of his crew. . . . Yes, the discipline and the contentment of his crew meant everything. Sailors, deep-water sailors, he well knew, cannot work well if assailed by something intangible, incomprehensible, or uncanny. It takes away their spirit ; they languish ; in some rare cases the mind gives way ; and men are slain by the madman !

He wanted nothing of that. So he consented to a attempt being made to capture and kill this ogre that both oppressed and destroyed the peace of the ship.

With a six-pound piece of pork we baited the shark-hook, made of three-eighth-inch diameter iron with a length of strong chain attached. We then bowlined a thick line of manila into the link at the end of the chain, and threw the tempting morsel over the stern to drift to the nose of the shark.

With feverish anxiety all the crew and "afterguard" watched, and waited. No work for the time being was done

on the ship, save at the wheel and galley, and even that with much indifference.

For a time the brute took no notice of the bait.

Strange kind of shark ! To all ordinary sharks a chunk of pork proves irresistible ; even common tin cans, if bright, will tempt them easily to turn over, and gloatingly swallow them—probably to their everlasting regret, if the lid be half torn off. But this shark seemed indifferent.

Then, when we were fast losing all hope, and feeling rather sick with disappointment, we were suddenly thrilled by seeing the brute approach. . . . He sniffed. . . . He fell back to his accustomed waiting-place !

"Well, I'll be damned !" cried the skipper drawing back.

How that crew cursed ! Others, in their silence, looked worse things, and perhaps felt more. The helmsman steered wide, but the officer of the watch let the fault pass without a murmur. He, too, perhaps felt the blight of these things.

O'Brien and O'Toole, who hailed from Galway I remember, positively asserted that the—ship was *banshee* ! Very excitable men, these Irish. Very superstitious too.

Aloha, the Kanaka, and more practical, offered, with much sangfroid, that if the ship was "brought to," to drop over and attack the brute with the long-bladed galley knife—such things he had done more than once in shark tournaments in his home at Fiji.

But the captain refused.

I saw him turn and whisper to our mate something about "owners," "risk," "delay" ; then he suddenly broke off—"Sho-rtly, lay below and fetch up my rifle."

I dived below into the cabin, took the gun off the rack, and glanced at Jehoshaphat, who, with rich braided cap jocularly tilted, and cigar between teeth, somehow gave me, as he swayed to the motion of the ship, the

inexplicable impression that he approved mightily of the strange doings which the ghastly visitor in our wake necessitated. Poor Jehoshaphat !

Without giving him further attention, however, I darted up to the poop. I handed the rifle to the skipper, who fired several times at the enemy, but to no purpose. Then, disappointed, he passed the rifle over to an old sailor Jack, tatooed like a cannibal, and who had been mixed up in the British Soudanese War twenty years before, and told him to do his "damndest."

He *did*. He nearly shot O'Toole, due to a lurch of the vessel. He disliked O'Toole, anyway. But his second shot I believe wounded the thing ; for although we saw no skin fly, it disappeared.

And, again, as before, just as our faces were lighting up, and tongues getting ready to flip out congratulations, our archangel spotted the brute once more. . . . Yes, there he lay—impassive, earnest, deadly—a couple of fathoms deep, beneath our starboard counter, where the deepening blue of the waters, and the shadows of the ship, merged into opaqueness.

Would he rise, turn over, and die of the ounce of lead we believed to be in him ? No ! He rose, gained courage seemingly, and swam unswervingly after us !

Beaten !

We tried other baits, and again fired many rounds, with no apparent effect. Our shipmate seemed doomed to a death of demented agony. Old shellbacks nodded their heads ominously. I dared not speak modernly to them. They were much older than I. Some had sailed half a century.

They *knew* !

And, moreover, had not O'Brien dreamed last night of muddy water, with a horse beside it ! No use trying further. The ship was "banshee'd"—so he said.

"Why, say, thet goldarned shark ain't a human shark,"

asserted Baltimore. "Never heard of a shark thet turned his cursed nose back on ship's pork. I hev', but I ain't a shark."

To this there was no reply. The spirit had gone out of the crew. Even "Spunyarn" seemed lifeless. One or two of the apprentices seemed numbed, others cheery but nonplussed.

Uncanny? Well, there it was.

As I listened to remarks, hushed and portentous—no one was working, it being the second dog-watch—I noticed from where I stood near the mainmast the mate securing a new line, baiting it with a very large piece of pork, and trimming it in such a way that the fat would show white all around.

"Sho-rtly, bring a couple of hands along here," he shouted to me as I approached.

He then climbed into the main rigging above the dead-eyes, and, shouting to the few hands near him to "git clear," threw the heavy bait well over the side.

All hands now rushed to this point. By manipulating the line in a certain and most skilful way, he imparted to the procedure the action of a dead body sinking.

And, indeed, it was just at that point where the body of Old Man Smith would slide into the sea from a tilted hatch. Ship's dead all pass this way.

The *General Gordon*, forging ahead very slowly in the light breeze, dragged the bait along, yet by a careful handling of the line the mate permitted it to drift slowly, gruesomely, alluringly, towards the stern.

The mate's act must have proved highly deceptive, for hardly had the splash died away, and the bait begun to drift slowly downwards and astern, than we saw a large black dorsal fin emerge suddenly from behind the stern of the ship. . . . We gasped.

When nearly abreast of the mizzen rigging it—dived! We could just discern the happening beneath the trans-

parent waters. Our breaths came short and quick. The mate lowered quiveringly the dim white lump ever so gently and—there!—the shark in a trice is beneath it. He comes vertically up to it—his hideous capacious mouth opens—the bait disappears! deceived—CAUGHT!

“Got the devil!” cried the mate full of curbed excitement. His cross-eyes glistened. His mouth made a thin line.

We all cheered lustily. And then we instinctively thought of Old Man Smith. What if——?

“Gather in the slack, you men. Hold fast! Quick—all hands!”

We sprang. We obeyed just in time, for there came a sudden furious jerk. But firm was the hook. How the brute struggled! And what demoniacal pleasure the thirty-six of us found as, clutching the line, we felt the giant tugs of the infuriated creature!

Sometimes his grim length flew to the surface, twirled and swirled, and then, amid great sea commotion, darted down, fathoms deep. But we held him. Oh, yes!

I see us now: Officers, apprentices, “idlers,” and men, all on the rope; all mixed up pell-mell, cursing and yelling, slipping and swaying, this way and that as the maddened brute flounders.

Gee! What joy! and Jehu General Jackson, what laughter! The old-fashioned incomprehensible superstitious line had snapped evidently—but not that real chain line down the creature’s gullet. No!

Three times did we succeed in bringing the shark alongside; and three times did he tear away. Game! But we were game too.

As we brought the monster in for the fourth time, accomplished by a mighty united pull and some profanity, the mate passed a quick turn of the hauling line around the fore-lanyard. This stopped his capering and kept the monster close to the ship’s side.





"AIN'T HE A PLATEFUL !"

Facing p. 149

Then over the rail, with a line around his body, leaped Leith Scotty, and hitched a whip—at the moment in use for sending a new sail aloft—to the ring on the end of the length of chain that secured the hook in the shark's gullet.

The other part of the whip we passed over a snatch-block, and again manned this new line, or "fall," with eager hands, and brutal hate.

"Haul!" cried the mate, bulging with intensity and hatred. "Haul! Blast ye!"

Up came the brute—twenty-one feet four inches of man-eating shark.

"Gee! Ain't he a plateful!" cried Baltimore, looking him up and down.

"Not arf!" agreed London Larry. "He oughter be in South Kensington an'——"

"'E ought to be where 'e is," interrupted Baltimore decisively.

Aloft and in board we swung him, and, the second mate suddenly letting go the line by which the shark had been suspended, the blood-thirsty brute dropped with a tremendous thud; a thud which made the deck resound for yards around.

"Thet'll bang some of the 'ell out of 'im!" cried Baltimore, the ringleader of all opening and appropriate remarks relative to deck doings.

"An' oi'll soon let the rest out of yez moiself!" added the hirsute O'Brien, drawing a sheath knife from his sea-boot, and viciously eyeing the shark as though it were a million-year-old Banshee caught.

He was immediately followed by O'Toole, looking as shaggy as an old ape, and as ferocious as a Dervish, who immediately plunged his knife into the body to the hilt.

All the others now whipped out their knives from the sheaths at their belts and madly joined in. Notwithstanding his wild floundering, and the terror-inspiring snapping of his ponderous jaws with six rows of gleaming

teeth, our knives soon left him a harmless, but repulsive mass of quivering pieces.

Some of the impassioned men quivered too ; a rebounding form of madness evoked by a sudden freedom from a stultifying oppression.

It was at this stage that I brought myself together—I had been as excited as any of them, though not so bad, or so full of downright ferocity, as some of the tough old shellbacks of the old school recently shipped at Sydney.

I leaned against the main fife-rail and began to think of myself as something apart from the late doings. Probably I resembled a satiated carrion crow.

While thus gathering myself together it became dark, suddenly—in those latitudes there is no twilight—and, taking up a deck lantern, I lit it, and subconsciously wandered towards the forecastle

Instinctively, I felt I had somewhat neglected Old Man Smith, and I liked him. He might want something—a drink, or a turn-over, perhaps.

I turned as I was about to enter the forecastle. . . . The men, to judge by the raucous and expletive sentences bawled to each other, were preparing a tackle to heave the mutilated carcase overboard. Chips, with some profanity and a saw, was busily sawing off a portion of the backbone to serve as an ornament, a flowerpot, or a present, when our home port was reached ; and others were collecting pieces of skin to act in place of canvas and sand as rubbing 'rags' on paintwork in the future.

Inside the forecastle, penetrating the deep gloom, I made my way among strewn sea chests and belongings to the Old Man's bunk.

I shed a light upon his face—now like a piece of weather-beaten rock. I listened. By his constant murmurings and mutterings, and the nature of them, I judged him still to be in the throes of delirium. But, curious to relate, there was neither agonised supplications,

nor terror-stricken invocations to "take that 'ellish thing away!"—simply a peaceful, though disconnected, wandering of the mind.

Quite serene, under the lantern's dim light, did his hard, wrinkled and deeply-tanned face, appear. I studied it. What in its fifty, sixty, or more years of sailing had it not seen?

Presently, he muttered disjointed and faltering reminiscences relative to old ships in which he had sailed; hunger, thirst, fights, open boats, mutiny, all mixed up with some recollections of a pleasant little garden somewhere in California.

Then a little Australian "gold-rush" talk crept from his lips with the tender utterance of a woman's Christian name—probably his first wife's. And upon this he opened his eyes; surprised, but intelligent.

He saw me. He smiled. He seemed very weak. The ominous shadows that lurked about his eyes were much deeper now.

I remained sitting on his old sea-chest beside his bunk with the lantern upon my knee, waiting to fetch anything he might want. I felt somehow his time had come.

There prevailed no sound except the melodious lap, lap, lap, and occasional tinkle, tinkle of the wavelets as they playfully caressed our bows without. No light, save that given by my smoky lantern. No friend, save me.

How still he seemed.

Suddenly, he struggled up to his elbow, and asked for Ben, our late friend.

I was about to console him and explain, when, staring surprisedly into the deep gloom of the forecastle where it narrows and becomes denser at the stem, he rapped out: "Sho-rt-y! Thet awful thing is sure gone!"

(I have always remembered vividly this particular incident in detail; due doubtless to its singular weirdness.

It is indelibly imprinted on my mind by reason of the fact that Smith had never received the slightest information, or even a bare suggestion from any of the crew of the body-hankering brute that had so relentlessly followed us astern. Indeed, the crew took all precautions to keep the dread and gruesome information from him. And succeeded.)

Following his extraordinary statement I gazed down upon him and noticed that his face now presented an exquisite calm—even beauty. Fear about eyes or mouth there was none. All abjectness had slunk away. Had these demons heard the gentle rustle of wings?

Presently, he attempted to rub his eyes; but failed. . . .

"Sho-rt-y," he whispered very feebly, looking not at me, but fixedly aft over the bunk-board, "the deck is all bright! (It was not.) The fo'c'sle-break sure seems to be all silver and moving away—going aft like . . . Why, Shorty!" and he clutched my outstretched wrist convulsively—"the ship is sure over the spot! . . . She—ah!—Mary! my ol' gal—aye, aye."

And he smiled triumphantly—serenely.

He was gone.

Next day Sails had performed his melancholy duty. And on a main hatch (plank), balanced on the rail (bulwark) by the tattooed hands of that sailor from Baltimore, the remains of Old Man Smith tarry, ready for the moment when the skipper, now reading the Burial Service, reaches the last word and gives a solemn nod to the tilter to pass it on its journey.

All the hands, some with tousled hair, all aflame in the early morning sun, are clustered around the spot. All stand bare-headed, and between open shirts, one sees deep chests, brown, hairy, and tattooed. They are like children as they stand listening wonderingly to the beautiful service for the dead.

The last sentence is reached—the last word. The

hatch is slowly tilted by our rough friend, now looking more serious than I had seen him before. The body of our old shipmate, who had weathered so many storms and tempests, slides gently down the hatch and over the end into the everlasting symphony of the ocean—out into another and greater ocean.

Hardly had it passed beneath the calm blue of the surface, and before even the bubbles had begun to form, when—

“Square away main yard! Haul on the lee fore brace!” shot from the raucous mouth of the skipper.

We jumped.

It is the way of the sea.

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER SIXTY-FOUR DAYS

After sixty-four days the *General Gordon*, in the wake of our panting little tug, *Sioux Chief*, pushed her rusty nose through the green waters leading up to the world-famed Narrows of the Golden Gate.

It was early evening. With sparks blowing aft like fire-flies disturbed, the *Sioux Chief* seemed in a hurry. Far away behind us, just edging a grey and cheerless horizon, a sea roke began to show up. It was the cause of the hurry ; for to be caught in the Narrows in the midst of this gloomy, intangible shroud is not only vexatious, but often expensively dangerous.

The danger is enhanced, moreover, by the fact that anchorage just here, even as a temporary expedient, is prohibited by the harbour regulations.

We, as a homebound crew, heartily concurred in the *Sioux Chief's* anxious hurry. The more she showed her heels, the better we liked her. No delay from any cause could we brook with equanimity.

No landsman can ever feel the hectic thrill and appreciate adequately the utter but silent delight felt by a deep-water sailor when, after months of confinement, and under strictest and often irksome discipline, his home port heaves in sight.

Sailor Jack rests his arm (if not aloft and opportunity serves) on the forecastle rail, or, on that of waist, or well, and falls unconsciously into a sweet and highly contemplative trance. And, if watched closely, one notices that his eyes grow wistful, and often full of tenderness.

He is being spoken to from within. His heart wells. But he rarely, if ever, betrays himself either by sign or by speech. Speech always did but hamper feeling. Instinctively he knows this. He says nothing.

With us, even the ever garrulous and gold-crazy O'Brien became stone dumb, and viewed the land as though it were the old homestead and he a prodigal son.

While watching these solitary spirits, these bronzed spartan sons of the deep, I stand beside our fresh-water tanks; the contents of which are now reduced to thin layers of fluid, mixed with rusty sediment. Recalling the nauseating taste of that "fresh" water (how my throat had revolted lately!) I turn with much relief to view the passing details that embellish so inspiringly the wondrous Golden Gate.

The blue-looking Point Reyes, Drake's Bay, and Duxbury Point far away on our port have already grown dim in the tenderest of evening lights, while from over there, ten miles off the port bow, my ears catch the roaring warning from the siren perched high upon the grim and desperate cliffs of Bonita Point.

Welcome sound! I am nearly home! Even the squawking sea-birds that halo the light and signal-station come to my eyes and heart as old friends—or rather will come when we draw a little nearer. And lo! away ahead on the starboard bow lies Lobos Point. . . . Joy!

Behind this particular Point reposes magnificently Cliff House, from the open windows of which—the dining-room I believe—I used, a year ago to spend happy hours watching the sprightly gambolling of the seals, and the sea-lions, on the rocks immediately below. Well—practically home of course now—yet—

"Sho-rt-y! Relieve the wheel!"—the skipper.

As I mount the poop on the weather side, I notice we are just off the harbour lightship; still in the open sea, and perhaps some eight or ten miles from the Golden Gate.

I take the spokes from Leith Scotty—for the last time—and “carry on.”

“Keep her head in line with Fort Point and Alcatraz light. All three objects to be in line—that’s the channel course.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” I answer, and repeat his order aloud, as is the custom at sea, when steering.

He left me, saying in an impromptu, friendly spirit—he felt home ties pulling perhaps—that the tug ahead was trying to do a similar thing.

After a few hours had waxed and waned, we drew abreast of Bonita Point on our port beam—the entrance to the celebrated Golden Gate.

Five miles ahead, I discerned the high, fortified island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay, rising high like some cumbersome, prehistoric monster awakening from the depths with one eye open—the lighthouse. Its eye can be seen flashing through the Golden Gate every five seconds. So powerful are these five second winks that they can be easily caught more than twenty miles out at sea—thank God!

To the nor’ard, after passing the naturally, and artificially, fortified Narrows—the Gibraltar of America—we catch a fairly good view of the richly timbered slopes of Sausalito.

This is a “swell” district in which our skipper lives with his tall flagpole. The inhabitants have their scenic railway and opulent Mount Tamalpais—some two thousand six hundred feet above ordinary respectable ground.

But we do not see much now, for the mist’s vanguard is beginning to enwrap us in its fleecy folds. Lime Point is left a candle blur on our port quarter, but its fog whistle still pierces the steamy gloom to inform us vaguely of our position.

All along our starboard, between intermittent fog onslaughts and ghostly wraiths, we catch a glimpse of

the high, defiant, promontory of half a thousand feet, around which, in terrace-like formation to the eye afloat, lies our home port, San Francisco ; or to give it its full historic appellation, "*Mission de los Dolores de Nuestro Padre San Francisco de Asis.*" Known to the short-breathed as "Frisco."

With the fog momentarily thickening, we bear up, slowly gliding as a phantom, to a temporary anchorage about a mile southwest of Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.

And, at the wheel, my ears catch odd, disjointed snatches of that chanty which betokens the end of the voyage—and a beautiful old sea chanty it is ; and with what welcome is it received !

" Oh ! Soon we'll 'ear th' Ol' Man Say,
(Leave 'r, John-ny, leave 'r)
Ye kin go ashore an' take yer pay.
(An' its time—for us—t' leave 'r !)
O ! Th' times was 'ard, an' th' wages low
(Leave 'r, John-ny, leave 'r !)
Th' w' yage was long, an' th' gales did blow
(An' it's time—for us—t' leave 'r !)."

Almost simultaneously with the casting off of our towrope and the dropping of our anchors into fourteen fathoms—here the bottom is sand and broken shells—those human, or rather inhuman leeches, the boarding-house crimps, skiffed alongside our vessel.

How they beamed with uttermost good fellowship upon our neck-craning crew above, who, leaning over the ship's rail, gazed half sheepishly down upon them. What snatches of tales I overheard of the golden opportunities and jasper-tipped chances that only awaited likely sailor boys ashore to seize them !

Bar-tenders received—I forget the figure ; something monstrous, if true. Door-tenders could not be obtained at any price—so it seemed.

"Only jest come right ashore now, boyees, out of this goldarn, rotten old waggon that ain't worth the price of junk. Yer skipper's thet all-fired mean he'd steal acorns from a blind hog; an' yer mate is that damn selfish that he don't give a middle name to his kids. Jest come right over now—my house'll sure fix ye up—go to sea agin jest when yer likes—or stay right home; no matter—gentleman's life for them as wants it. Needn't go to sea any more ef yer takes the jobs goin'—nothin' better, or as good, in Klondyke. . . ."

And thus they volleyed up cunningly, persuasively to our men. The spiders and the flies.

Yes, apparently Molly Fortune ashore waited feverishly to kiss their dry and salt-cracked lips. (She would kiss for one night, perhaps, and then Poor Jack, shanghaied again, with his fabulously-paid shore job yet ahead, and the night as dark as Erebus, would awaken to find the relentless arms of Father Neptune once more closely entwined about him; sans bag, sans money, sans respect, sans everything! Done again! doped again—his sole possession a "dead horse!")

The mate and second mate tried their level best to prevent these water-rats from boarding the ship, but, what with the harassing duties inseparable from ship arrival—and we were a big ship—and the being called in as witnesses to some fiery and acrimonious dispute between our skipper and the tug skipper—who was trying to "bite" him on the dues—these ultra-impertinent and mannerless shore gentry gained deck footing.

Like Pecksniffs they crept unctuously for'ard, and installed themselves ingratiatingly within our forecastle. It is art. The Jew calls it "pisness." Here they fell at once to offering, even showering five-cent cigars and stogies right and left. Baiting the trap.

Soon the bottle appeared—the well-known "Welcome Home" Brand—and, at length, with this powerful ally,

John Forecastle, never great in liquor-resisting stamina, went down before its enchanting enveiglement. His healthy stomach, now like a babe's, because of his sea-enforced teetotalism, at once responded. Soon he began to sing—and to curse. The ship was cursed roundly; and the officers, squarely.

O'Brien, the gold-crazed, and now rapidly becoming the whisky-crazed as well, capered nimbly: bobbing about everywhere, like a green-pea on a beaten kettle-drum. "Only ol' Oirland bred dancers and real foighting men," he rapped out.

Into song he dived suddenly: "By Killarney's lakes and fells," he raucously bawled, and reaching somewhere in the verse a something about "wings and rest" he fell. And so remained. (A stupid man this.)

Near him on a sea-chest with a nose resembling a pea-nut, sat a low-faced, pock-marked crimp playing a mouth organ. (I could have screwed his neck cheerfully.) In his lap he tenderly nursed a large flagon of rye whisky—the real tangle-foot. He himself did not drink; he was "under the doctor." A crimp can never be accused of drinking—while at work. No!

O'Toole, with constantly pursing and bulging lips—reminding one of bellows—and glassy eyes, regarded his prostrate friend with a long and stupid gravity. Seemed not to understand "at all, at all." A personal condition he emphasised with a nod or two of his great bewhiskered head, signifying either "Tut tut" or "Oi'll be dawmed."

"By St. Patrick! T' think yewins that only one, just only one swig did it—the last one! . . . Phwat a ship-mate!" he blurted out disgustedly. He then staggered from his sea-chest to shake him . . . reached him, fell over him, and remained silently on top of him!

And the mouth-organ man played on, apparently unobservant.

But a crimp possesses eyes like those of flies, which

are said to contain a score of facets. He saw, and perhaps, like the ever-knitting Madam Dufarge at the guillotine, counted and cried : " One—two ! " . . . He was earning his living.

Soon, other sailor legs were flying about to the accompaniment of that mouth organ, now helped in its fell work by a gaudy, block-looking thing called a melodeon, worked by a weasel type of man whose face might be said to have reached an early primitive stage—it reminded me of that of a marmot.

This rodent individual, however, played the melodeon devilishly well, and, like the Pied Piper, soon secured a large following.

At this stage I left them.

Coming on deck I looked about me. Up aloft the starboard watch, busy but surly, were furling the tops'ls. But for the Old Man, and the mate, revolvers in hand, at the foot of the shrouds these men would have been down in a jiffy to swell the hilarious crowd in the fo'c'sle. But a " one-eyed Susan " in the grip of a fearless skipper is an awkward thing to face ; no matter how sweet the promise of Heaven—or liquor.

I looked on from the lee side of the deck-house. Near me stood two jowl-jawed crimps. I catch : " But what in 'ell kain we dew ! We kaint make men out of a length of manila, I guess !—else I'd make five hundred ! . . . There ain't bin a son of a gun of a salty soul in my caboose (house) for weeks, an', mark yew, out there lying 'way yonder in the fog is the *St. Elmo* bound Chiney way. 'Ong Kong, I guess, with 'r skipper prayin', yes, prayin' down on his prayer-bones to thischicken every flamin' mornin' to bring 'im some men.

" It's enough to rile and send a damn man crazy. . . . To 'ell with the Klondyke an' all in it ! . . . An' 'e's offerin' fifty dollars a man, or fer anythin' on two legs, an' I kaint git 'im the sight of a pants anywheres. . . .

Only wants two men—one at a push—to complete 'is sailing list. It's enough to bring tears to a glass-eye, if——"

"Aye," broke in the other, expectorating a long stream of tobacco juice, "it's a sure damn shame to let good honest money like thet slip by ! . . . I guess I'll git an' round up some of this homely bunch aboard here before to-morra mornin'—even if I hev to swill 'em in champagne, or tap 'em !—never knewd sech bad times, I hev'n't !"

"Yep !" concurred his companion with a leer, "I wish they'd sink thet goldarned Klondyke so fur in 'ell thet the devil himself and all 'is asbestos angels couldn't find it with a forty-mile telescope. That I dew !"

And here a burst of maudlin song and a thick chorus burst along the deck, as someone opened the port fore-castle door.

At the sound both men turned, and as they slunk for'ard one of them muttered : "And it's right 'ere where we go gatherin' nuts and may."

To the waiting harvest they went, and the door closed after them.

Ruminating on what I had heard, I realised that things on the Water Front of San Francisco had not mended in the least degree. Still the cry : Men wanted ! Men at any price ! Even human jetsam of any kind, if on two legs, would do—could be *made* to do !

But not for Hiram *this* time ! No !

Presently I followed these two landcrabs into the fore-castle. At twenty, one wants to know.

Inside the spirit and smoke-laden interior the port watch sat, spat, smoked and sprawled about. The voyage was apparently over. But only for that portion of the port watch which comprised those gold-searching itinerants who had taken the place of those members of the original crew who had "run" at Sydney.

These old shellbacks, now turned "gold-rushers," had

contracted with our skipper to work the vessel in return for their passage to an anchorage in 'Frisco Bay. We had anchored. They felt themselves free—and were.

But the others, belonging to both starboard and port watches, who had signed the regular ship's articles, must still await those grand momentous words from the mate: "That will do, men." And these sweet and final words can only be heard after the final anchorage.

At these "regular article men" the "gold rushers" hurled much truculent badinage and coarse gibes. Just as things were becoming threateningly warm, they stopped to listen to a cadaverous-looking young man, who broke into a formidable song, the first line of which ran—"I Fear No Foe in Shining Armour—not even a Can of Salmon!"

He drew much applause, and a crimp drew a cork—encouragingly.

The cadaverous young man was followed by a giant-like creature of Bolshevik aspect. He seemed chock-full of whisky and sentimental slush. In a squeaky and surprising voice, he sang something about "a little green leaf in a Bible," mixing it up with something about a woman who stood "underneath the gaslight glitters."

I could make nothing of it. Neither could he. He made his own way out of it by rolling helplessly from his perch upon the bowsprit bitts to the deck. And this world knew him no more—for a while at any rate.

And that marmot-faced crimp over there, with face as white as a mothball, ever furtively watching, doubtless counted "three!"

As he squeezed out "After the Ball" and the "Old Oaken Bucket" on his magnetic melodeon, I looked around and noticed a negro. . . . Somehow I remembered his broad and evil face. Where? . . . After a little while full remembrance suddenly burst—the NEGRO HELPER OF CALICO JIM!

He failed to recognise me ; so many men and lumpy lads in those hectic Klondyke days had passed through his large black hands since the Fall of '99. San Francisco had dropped back, in no slight measure, to the feverish Sacramento times of '49.

At the moment he seemed to be having some high words with the "Doctor" ; a quarrel which suddenly leaped into a furious, and blasphemous heat.

The verbal output of these two men was terrific. Had the "Doctor" been manhandled, doped, and shanghaied by this imp at some time ? From the spluttering, volcanic words I caught, apparently he had ; moreover, had suddenly become aware of the identity of this negro.

"I'll butt yoo to de berry deble !" hissed Slush with lips and teeth like those of a bulldog. "I'll butt yoo right surah into——" But I came away.

Hardly had I reached the deck outside however before, hurtling pell-mell through the forecastle doorway, frothing at the mouth, these two mad negroes crashed, their black skins turning to a greyish tinge (as negro skins do when under tense and livid excitement) and their breath thick with blasphemy. Wild beasts.

What now ?

Slush, with blood-shot eyes and madly dilating nostrils, ran towards the door of our carpenter's shop just aft of the main mast, turned and stood with his massive woolly head bent low, facing his antagonist. Calico Jim's runner crouched near the foremast, fifty feet away, looking the very essence of villainy and danger—a panther. Both seemed horrible in their frenzy.

Suddenly, without any signal being given, for so it seemed to me, the two men bent lower their great woolly heads and ran as hard as they could full tilt at each other ! . . . Smash !

Their bent heads met squarely—horribly!

I heard the skull of one crunch as though it had been an egg-shell. . . . I sickened.

The crimp's form crumpled and dropped. He never moved or even quivered. He lay as still, limp and ungathered as a dish-clout. I never saw him move again in this world. He may have been killed on the spot; I do not know. Sheep fight in the same way, and at times die. But these were . . . yes . . . after all, they were men. I felt numbed.

"Dat am a surah good butt!" cried Slush, the abhorrent conqueror. "Yah, sirees, a unded (hundred) dollah butt! . . . But no nigger boy ken butt dis chichan out ob dis world! Dat am so! . . . I am surah de champion butter ob Californy, I am. I 'ev butted a goat for ten dollahs! . . . I am de mos' best. . . ."

I spun round on my heel—utterly sickened of all. I made my way to my lamp-room and—was sick.

"Had anyone ever witnessed such low brutality, backed by callous on-looking drunken depravity?" I asked myself. No, surely all such happenings finished when primitive fearsome monsters fought each other in the primary Jurassic slime.

CHAPTER XIX

A SWIM FOR LIFE IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

The ship's lamps trimmed for the last time, my stomach emptied, I returned on deck with a sudden but great determination. I would go ashore—to-night—immediately, if possible. I would free myself from the ship now that her crew had turned into wild beasts.

The ship! Ah, the ship! my home for twenty thousand miles, no longer swam in the open sea, the cleanest thing God ever made. Rather did she seem in my mind to be marooned in a broad and slimy pool. I would leave her—now!

Outside I noticed that the starboard watch had descended from aloft, leaving all up there well furled and snug. Over the sides some of the roistering triumphant crimps were hilariously pushing off, accompanied by most of the sailor "Kangaroos," "dead to the world"—not a leg under them.

"What do you think of these old sea-dogs?" queried I to English Sammy.

"Shorty, mi fether kep' whippets in t' Owd Country—they 'ad more sense!" he returned laconically.

I believed him.

"Some men at fifty, Shorty, 'ave less sense than they was born wi'," he added as he left me.

That, too, seemed true.

One crimp I well remember—the heavy fellow with the jowlish jaw and pimply nose—had heaped into his boat that dead-trunk Bolshevik-looking Australian, who sang so surprisingly about the "little green leaf in the Bible."

Was he pulling his inert victim to the shore in like manner to his deeply freighted brethren? No! Instead, he pulled with great, masterly strokes through the eerie mist and falling night towards the *St. Elmo*—the barquantine bound west. In the morning his passenger would awake to find himself at sea both in mind and body. No golden Klondyke for him for many and many a moon.

And the jowled-jawed crimp would be fifty dollars richer to-night—real pocket-gold, as good as any pocket-gold found in the Klondyke.

I watched them being swallowed up in the fog, a picture of a giant spider towing a dead beetle to its lair.

The second mate, who leaned over the rail beside me, looked on and nodded comprehensively: "Guess that 'Kangaroo' won't grow sudden knock-kneed when 'andling *his* pay next August!" he murmured cynically. "One less fur the Old Man to square at noon to-morrow. Ef they don't put 'im in irons to-night he'll be Hell with the lid off in the mornin'!" And he turned away nonchalantly.

Such is the sea.

The other boat loads, pulling in scattered fashion for the Water Front, contained mainly the other "free gratis" men we had shipped in Australia; men who were eager for Klondyke. To-morrow morning most of them, if not all, would be bound for China! No crimp ships a man to Klondyke—oh, no! Three of these same "Kangaroos" I subsequently learned from Baltimore were actually shipped that very night round the Horn in the *Knight Templar* to Antwerp. . . . Man proposes; a crimp disposes.

Turning, I heard the skipper at my elbow—a short laugh.

"I guess we'll git some shore-runners, if need be, to take her up to the wharf—the tug is coming out at four bells if the fog lifts," he said to the mate.

"Very well, sir," he answered; and the skipper adding nothing more, he walked away.

Seizing my opportunity I stepped in and put my case to the Old Man, emphasising my great desire and yearning to go ashore there and then; also, I made clear my financial position.

"How much do you want?" he queried.

"Five dollars," I answered in as modest tones as I could command.

Without demur he counted into my palm five silver dollars.

"But yew kaint go ashore, Sho-rt-y," he added quickly. "There ain't a boat available—guess yew'll hev to wait right here till to-morrow noon—unless that crimp yonder 'll land yew—better stay right here," he added thoughtfully. . . . "Besides, the fog is coming down agin," he continued, as he glanced towards the Strait.

But could I listen to reason? No!

I thanked him shortly; for he detested profuseness, and went for'ard. Through my heart life suddenly sprang—FREE! What a feeling it is!

Ruffianly crimps were still busy wheedling, urging and bundling torpid victims, who knew not their heads from stumps of trees, over the side into their waiting boats. But the starboard watch, my old watch, still remained sober, and practically intact. Marriage puts a lead weight into a man's pocket.

I shook hands warmly with Baltimore, Leith Scotty, Aloha (the Kanaka), English Sammy, and London Larry, with a hearty promise to meet them all in Maynard's down Dupont Street—a lively well-known resort in those days—at six o'clock on Saturday night. Nattery Chips and supercilious Sails also bade me a sailor's farewell—Chips gave me a slap on the back and a shark's spine-joint for luck! And Twinkle, the steward, twinkled upon me from the only eye he had—poor fellow!

With this I left them. But Leith Scotty caught me up. "Shorrty, petter wait till to-morrow an' go ashore wi' us——"

But could I listen to this honest, far-seeing Scotsman when the fire of liberty burned fiercely within me? No! How stupid and impetuous is one at twenty.

I waited until the most drunken of the men, and the most villainous-looking of the crimps, had left. Then, seeing O'Brien (very drunk) and a "not over sober" crimp, yet "palatable," prepare to descend into the boat alongside, I made towards them. He was the last of the crimps to leave.

"Now?—or hours and hours of gnawing waiting?" I asked myself reluctantly.

"Now!" I answered fatalistically, and stepped forward to the crimp. I offered him two dollars to put me ashore.

"Git in," he said as he took the money.

I took a last glance around. . . . Dear old ship! Wisps of mist now clung tentatively to her rigging and cordage, while streaky portions glided, after the manner of wraiths, over the deck and beyond. Beads, looking like tears, had formed and rested on the rail top, making all damp and cold to the touch.

Over the side, towards the Narrows of the Golden Gate, I saw great billows of fog, like giant bales of cotton-wool, rolling slowly imperiously into the Bay. Above, in the west, rose a blurred, full moon.

"They must be quick," I said to myself, "if they intend reaching the Water Front comfortably before this misty lot comes down upon us." So thinking, I turned and told the crimp who was bundling the maudling and half-torpid O'Brien over the side to "get a move on," indicating at the same time the fog.

"Beaucoup of time," he returned gruffly, "I ken fetch shore, fog or no."

A Swim for Life in San Francisco Bay 169

With that he and O'Brien scrambled very clumsily over the rail down a rope line into his boat below. I followed. I noticed it was a very small boat ; much smaller even than our gig—almost a coracle.

At this moment of leaving, the skipper with Sonny came forward.

" Good-bye," he said, " and, say, Sho-rt-y, come right over to Sausalito next Sunday to see us. Good ball game in the afternoon. Turn in to supper and meet my darter."

Gee ! At twenty, one specialises in daughters.

I thanked him with sudden enthusiasm, and said I would be right there, sure.

Hardly had we pushed off from her rusty sides, and the crimp taken his bearing by catching a lucky flash from Alcatraz light, before the drunken O'Brien began to prove troublesome. First he wanted to take the tiller from me ; then he wanted to row ; then he wanted to sit athwart the bow ; finally he decided we were not taking him shorewards !

He reached for the oars. I reached for my hip-pocket.

Said the crimp to me in an undertone : " I hev a damned good mind to give 'im 'one in the pinny ' to settle him."

But for a moment he refrained from administering this particular palliative, and we parried O'Brien's dangerous idiosyncracies as best we might. But when presently O'Brien directed me peremptorily, with uplifted fist, to steer for a gaslighted buoy off our starboard—a proposition, that if carried out, would take us through the Golden Gate and out to sea—we decidedly objected.

I drew out a gun—the one Ben used to own.

For a moment the sight of this took him aback, and made him pause. Evidently, in his fermenting brain, emerged the fact that a gun was a nasty thing ; a thing that might go off. So it might.

During this trying interval, the crimp directed me to steer towards a certain light. He said it was North Point light at the end of a shore jetty. "If yew miss the light, listen for its fog bell—rings every five seconds," he added.

This I did. Sometimes I caught the light, or its loom, but just now I had lost it for some minutes. And in this anxious interim O'Brien, awakening abruptly from his moroseness, exasperatingly staggered up from his seat, determined to take the oars—to row back to the ship.

It was an impossible proposition, for the whereabouts of the ship was now hopelessly lost in the rapidly thickening mist; besides we wanted the shore. What an ass a drunken man is sometimes.

So overmasterful did O'Brien momentarily become, and so extreme became the sudden danger from a perilously wobbling boat, that the crimp, much the physical unequal of O'Brien, finding his dangerous unruly passenger swarming upon his back trying desperately, if clumsily, to seize his oars, presented him with a sharp vicious jab. He aimed at the stomach with the end of one oar—to quieten him and thus save the situation.

Unfortunately, the blow reached a little too high, and, though it sent the orang-outangish O'Brien sprawling into the fore-peak, he staggered up in a moment and in a vile drunken temper threw himself madly upon the crimp.

In a moment all was over. As the boat careered, I jumped up and sprang clear. I felt no desire to rise under an upturned boat and drown. No!

Down into the cold waters of San Francisco Bay I went, and under the water swam anywhere away from the overturned boat.

When I rose to the surface I could see nothing but heavy mist about my head. . . . Lost! Once I thought

I heard a muffled call, and swam towards it. I entertained gallant notions of putting that asinine O'Brien on the upturned boat, but—nothing!

I then turned anxiously in another direction, still with the object of finding the overturned boat, or at least one, or both, of the oars. . . . Nothing.

I swam around steadily for a while and called and called! . . . Nothing!

The main body of the fog now buried all but the immediate saucer of water under my chin. I grew nervous—frightened. Fear stampeded my spirit. Yet I felt I had no rendezvous with Death.

Shaking ugly thoughts away, I struck out. But where lay the land? Direction was all lost. For some terrible moments this problem baffled me.

At length, remembering that the tide as we left the ship was flowing—and it flows into the Bay from near the Golden Gate in a north-easterly direction—I took note, as best I could, helped by an experimental expectoration upon the water, of the direction of the quiet swells about me, and, fashioning my efforts accordingly, struck, I hoped, a good southerly course that should give me the Water Front—the nearest shore.

I now tried to preserve coolness of mind by harkening to an advice I once heard: "When in a seemingly hopeless position, think of something else—for a moment; neglect this, and you might die crazy."

The effect of putting this into practice proved not only a wonderful and surprising stimulant to the muscles and spirit, but a handy and potent weapon to drive out that grim spectre Fear. Good! I thought of incidents in my schooldays. I even laughed. . . . I tried to believe how nice the water felt after all; and how healthful!

But with that thought of water there crowded into my mind a vision of the sea-lions of San Francisco Bay. Did they attack man? . . . Then what of the octopuses,

those gigantic spiders of the deep? Outside the Golden Gate, I well knew, these hideous monsters of the seas were among the largest specimens in the world—fifty feet from tentacle tip to tentacle tip, and as big around at the root as a man's body! Were there any of these parrot-beaked sucker monsters in the bay?—near me? What of smaller ones inside the Bay? Were there any? It was often said there were! My God! What of——. But then, with a desperate mental effort, I brought my mind to centre upon the advice.

And immediately groping, bony-fingered, Fear left me again.

A few moments more as I turned to a breast stroke, my heart seemed to stop suddenly. . . . A dark disc, with two strange glaring eyes, filmed over with transparent water, rose and floated close to my vision—an officer's cap with two brass buttons.

Oh, the relief!

I laughed aloud hysterically. I put the cap on my head to show myself that I was perfectly sane and fearless. . . .

Once I thought I caught the deep lazy stir of engines, and of beaten water. Instantly I shouted lustily, but in thick fog the human voice carries but a few yards.

Was it the *Oakland Ferry* in the Eastern part of the Bay? Whatever it was, it departed, leaving nothing but silence and gloom behind.

Nevertheless, having some knowledge of San Francisco Bay, I altered my course more to where I judged the true south to lie—in that direction lay my only hope.

I felt myself tiring. Fortunately clad in the thinnest of cloth from the skipper's slop-chest, and feet encased in the lightest of canvas shoes, I carried little superfluous weight. Yet I felt this lot must go; even the three big silver dollars within the pockets.

Ben had taught me in the San Francisco Swimming

Baths a year ago how to undress easily in the water. This handy aquatic accomplishment—which he then termed a “water-quiff”—I put into effect, and regretted that the thought of undressing had not previously occurred to me.

I swam much better now.

At length I thought I saw a light, but immediately lost it, if light it was, in the blanket folds of mist, and failed utterly to pick it up again. Moreover, on more mature thought, taking as before the direction of the swells as my guide, the light lay in the wrong direction.

I kept to my pre-determined course, due south.

The water now seemed colder. Was I, after all, drifting through the Golden Gate—the Golden Gate here, and not the golden gate beyond all ken? No—surely. . . .

Giant Despair began to wring my heart and spirit. when, almost at the point of giving up, my ear caught—yes—no—yes! the sound of rippling water, gently slapping a surface. . . . The effect shot life into me. Hope breeds electrified muscles. I dashed!

Swish—swish—swish, with rapid overhand strokes I tore towards the sound. Was it a ship’s side, or that of an anchor buoy? No. A wall? . . . I felt it. Yes—a blank, concrete wall, and, alas! not the slightest sign of a foot or hand-hold! It stretched seemingly high above my head into the night-laden fog. What a horrible, forbidding thing I felt it to be.

In the thick mist I swam eagerly along it, not knowing definitely at which end lay the land; for here there existed no pronounced swell to guide me. Moreover, in swimming thither, I had turned abruptly from my southerly direction. I judged I had swum somewhere in among the scores of pier wharfs that stretch out far into San Francisco Bay, like fingers from a hand.

Which “finger” could this be? . . . Evidently brand new, and still unfurnished with its timber fendering; and perhaps still incomplete in upper wharf equipment, for no vessel lay moored alongside it.

I continued to swim in fervent hope of foot or hand-hold, momentarily becoming conscious I swam lower and lower in the water. Was I, after all, to drown miserably like a water-rat beside a wall, to sink and drown beside this giant tempter that had cruelly lured me to its pretended succour? Surely not!

I turned on my back and shouted the shout of despair. . . . Nothing!

Again I turned over and swam along the unrelenting cliffy-side half demented. Every little while I 'trod water' and searched agonizingly with my palms against the wall for that succour which seemed irrevocably denied to me. Some protuberance—any protuberance, to rest my aching arms. . . . Nothing! My God!

Despair ground my spirits to atoms. I felt myself to be drowning and—I did not care! Then that sturdy advice rushed in again; and again my mouth came above the water level. "The shore cannot be far away now surely," I said, and struggled exhaustedly on. . . .

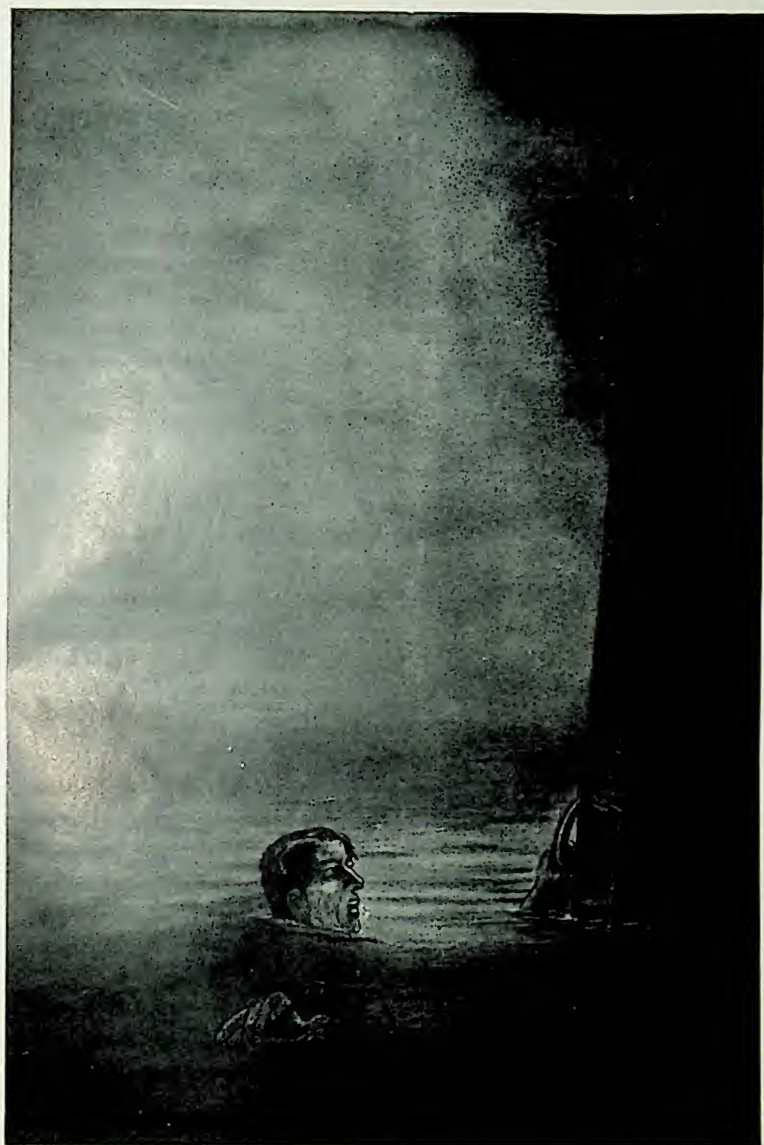
I 'trod water' for the last time. I put out my hands feebly and again searched a square foot or so of wall. . . . Nothing! And so, against that hideous wall, I began to sink, lower . . . lower . . .

I remember water gurgling in my ears, and, strange to say, the sensation was not unpleasant. But there came a sudden check. My finger-tips against the wall encountered something! . . . Life sprang back! My fingers clutched convulsively—an iron ring!—a large mooring-ring . . .

My God had *not* forgotten me!

With both hands clutching my iron salvation I drew my feet under me against the wall, and, with head and shoulders now well above the water, shouted and shouted madly.

Then I tried to slip one leg through the ring to gain more rest. I failed, but retained my hand hold and continued to shout and shout and shout.



" MY FINGERS CLUTCHED CONVULSIVELY A LARGE MOORING-RING "

Facing p. 174



A Swim for Life in San Francisco Bay 175

At length I heard fog-muffled voices. "O—O—ahoy!" I yelled.

"Mon Dieu! . . . Qu'est qu'il-y-a?—Qui est la?—O—hey!" I heard above me.

Fortunately I spoke French, and quickly responded: "Un homme qui se noie!—qui meurt!"

"Mon Dieu! Tiens! Mon pauvre brave!—Courage! . . . Attendez un moment—Tenez . . . Jean [to a companion], ici! Une corde, vite . . . Vite!"

Very soon, guided by my shouts, a light mooring line or lariat snaked down the wall-side. In a dream I made it fast as best I could about my numbed and naked body. They hauled me to the top of the jetty.

I noticed my two French rescuers, and I saw their "slither"-caps, and then—

The next thing I saw was an angel face under a nurse's cap, and a soothing voice saying: "Honey, drink this!"

I lay in a snow-white bed in a hospital ward!

Gee!

In the hospital in San Bruno Avenue I lay three days, during which time my spent strength returned rapidly; for at twenty one speedily recuperates. But my hair all left my head! When months after it reluctantly returned, it was a different colour, well streaked with grey! And grey-streaked it has ever remained.

Notwithstanding my experience and consequent delay I kept my appointment with our Old Man at Sausalito. I saw his "darter," a most lovable being; indeed, to such good terms did we arrive that, before the evening concluded, I took her upon my knee. She was barely three, so—.

And as I returned across the bay in the ferry that Sunday evening I gazed thoughtfully down into the calm and silent waters, and thought of—ah, well—God is good.

And thus ended that most memorable voyage.

CHAPTER XX

L'ENVOI

In the twilight of a solemn summer's evening in the year 1915, I was leaving the decks of the *Fantee* in the Brunswick Dock, Liverpool, where I had left a friend—the mate. Returning over the swing-bridge at the west end of the dock, my eyes suddenly alighted upon two four-masted barques moored beside the north sheds.

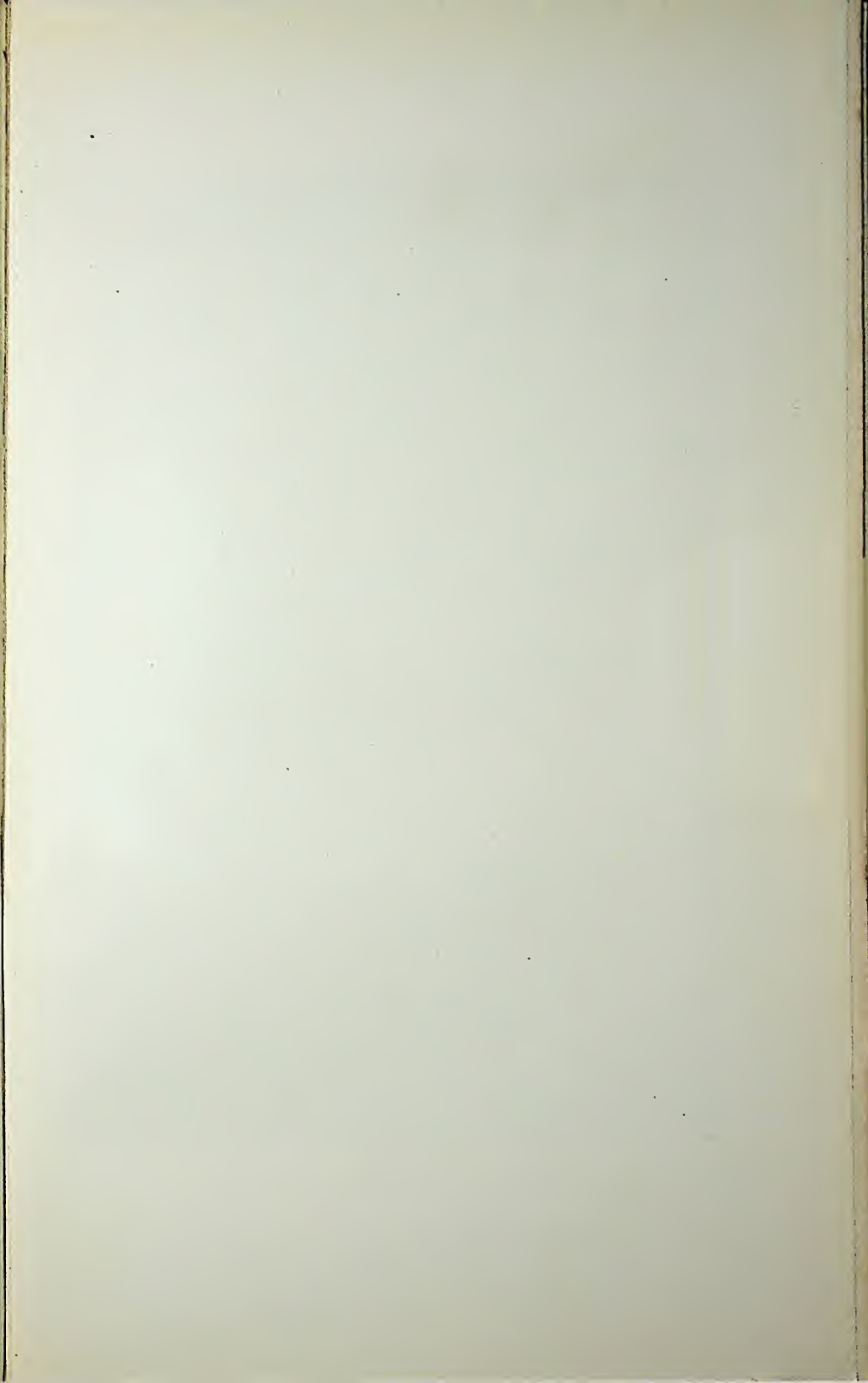
One I failed to recognise ; but the other—No—Yes !—the old *General Gordon* ! Yes, there she lay, with yards cock-billed and deeply laden, brooding on the water like a hen upon its nest. Her decks were silent and deserted. She certainly had much to brood over. Soon, stung by the viper Steam, she must pass from the ken of all men.

On her deck I found a solitary watchman—at a glance an old deep-water sailor—who, with clay pipe in mouth, gazed with wistful interest over the rail across the dock at the steam-driven leviathans. We fell into happy reminiscences.

I learned that she had battled round the Horn with a cargo of Californian produce, tinned fruits chiefly. Bad Cape Horn weather had been experienced ; so bad indeed that the Master of the companion ship, lying astern, had felt obliged to ease the agony of his ship by throwing overboard some hundreds of tons of his cargo.

But not so the *General Gordon*.

Somehow, I felt a subtle delight in learning that the dear "ol' gal" had not "vomited" ; that she had retained absolutely all and every bit that the bills-of-lading enumerated.





" CONDEMNED TO BE A MISERABLE COATHULK, UP SOME FOETID AFRICAN RIVER "

What had become of our Old Man ? Retired probably, with his tall flag-pole and " darter " in far-off Sausalito.

I asked of the crew, but the old watchman could tell nothing regarding them, except that he had "yeard they was a rum lot." Next day I discovered that of all the men I once knew who so sprightly trod her decks some fifteen years before not a single one remained.

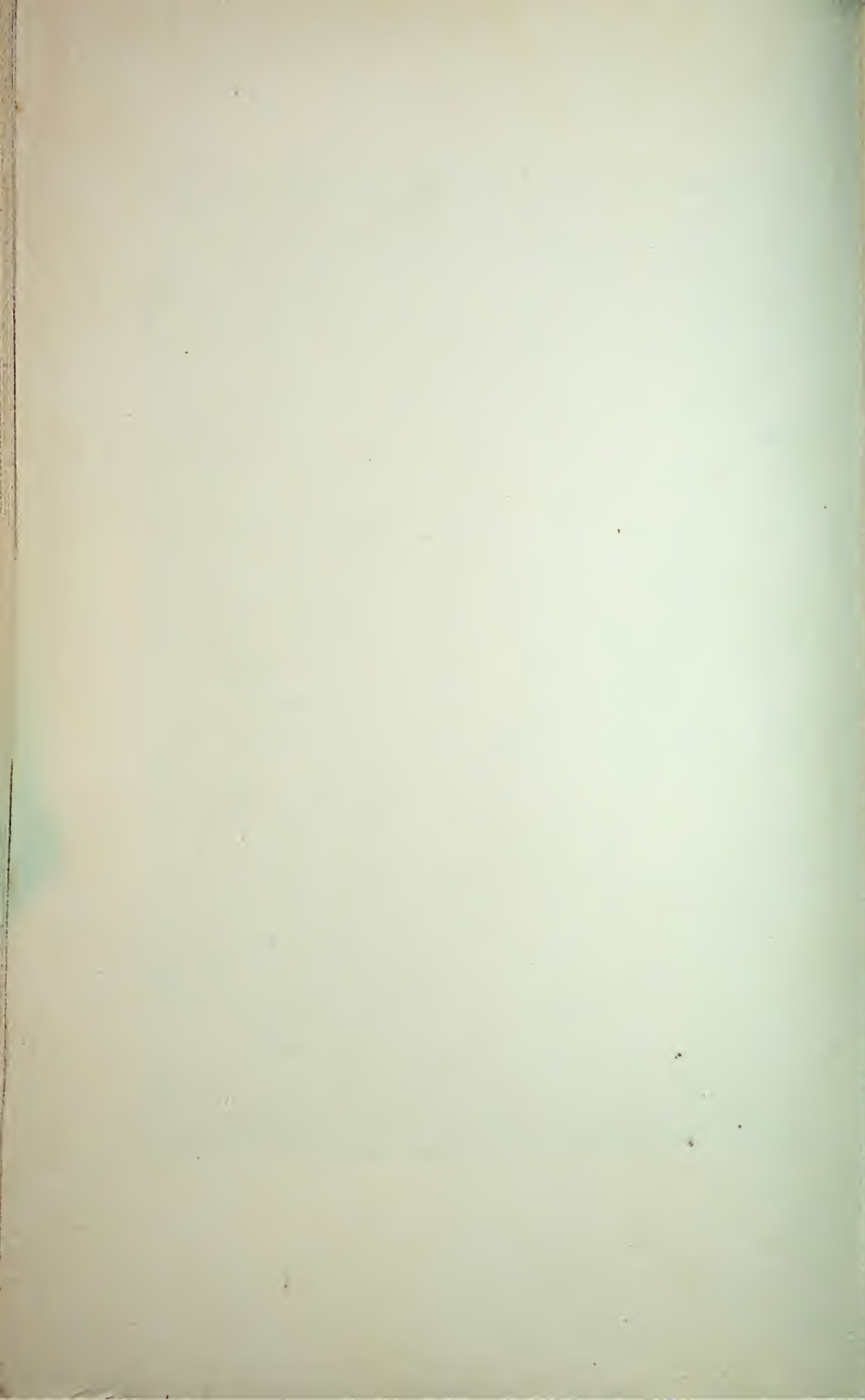
In the thickening evening light I saluted her, and as the water fell a little in the dock, because of the sluicing of distant lock-pits, she swayed perceptibly, as if in friendly acknowledgment of my salute.

Inwardly I whispered : " Good-bye, old friend. We, I feel, shall never meet again. In my life still far have I to go ; whereas your days are almost ended ; fore-shortened by an obdurate and unromantic progress ; condemned within a decade to be cut down and callously sold, like some undesirable chattel, to some ear-ringed Portugee or Greek, at a tittle of thy worth. Or, likely enough, condemned to be a miserable coal hulk ; to rust thy gallant sides out in some foetid African river, or low Brazilian port—Good-bye ! "

And, as I turned away, the gentle, mystic light of evening stole in between us and enfolded her—jealous seemingly of our friendship.

I left her in that jealous keep and vigil—a great and gallant memory.

FINIS



Glossary of Sea Terms used in this Book unfamiliar to the Landsman

- A.B.—'Able-bodied.' A full first-class seaman, higher rated than an 'ordinary seaman.' No 'dud.' Clever, highly practical man in all ship's work. Fearless.
- A' BACK.—Refers to the sails when laid against the mast through a sudden change of wind—sometimes a highly dangerous occurrence. The sails are sometimes laid aback purposely; as for instance in coming to anchorage with a fair wind in an open bay.
- A' BEAM.—Amidships (see plan of deck, page 12). Thus, 'wind a'beam' means wind blowing at right angles to the vessel.
- APPRENTICES.—Lads serving four years at sea to become officers in the Mercantile Marine. During the fourth year the apprentice, now a strong healthy young man, is considered the equal in practical seamanship to any A.B. At the end of the fourth year he attends a navigation school ashore in order to receive theoretical training, and subsequently to sit for his second mate's certificate. In purely American and Canadian vessels there are no apprentices. The system is different. But in this narrative of the sea the author has called them 'apprentices' in order that the British reader will comprehend and distinguish their personalities and positions on board.
- ARCHANGEL.—Youngest ship's apprentice, also called 'nipper.'
- BACKSTAYS.—Stout wire ropes of several interwoven strands stretched from a mast or topmost head to the sides of a vessel—some distance aft of the mast—to provide extra resistance to the mast from being urged forward, or falling forward.
- BARQUE.—Usually a three-masted vessel, with the fore mast and main mast square rigged, and the mizzen mast (the aftermost mast) rigged fore-and-aft. In a four-masted barque, all three masts as above are square rigged; but the jigger mast (the aftermost in this case) is rigged fore-and-aft. Were all masts square rigged she would be termed technically a *Ship*. (See *Ship*.)
- BELAY.—To make fast a rope by twisting it around a *cleat* or *belaying-pin*—usually twisted in the form of a figure 8.
- BELAYING-PIN.—A loose tapered bar of wood, or iron, swelling towards one end; from twelve inches to eighteen inches long; placed in holes in the fife rails and fiddles for the purpose of belaying a rope or fall (see *Belay*). Have often been used as weapons of offence and defence. In sailing vessels the principal belaying-pins are fixed near the shrouds because all halyards lead here.
- BEND.—To 'bend sail' means to make sail; or fix a sail to the yards. There is also a sea-knot called a '*bend*.'
- BILLBOARD.—A support upon which the *bills* or *flukes* of an anchor rest when on deck.

BINNACLE.—The stand—often of brass—in which the compass in any sea-going vessel is set—except steam trawlers, where the compass is set in the roof of the wheelhouse above the head of the steersman.

BITTS.—There are several kinds of 'bitts'; *Bowsprit bitts*, *riding bitts*, and *mooring bitts* being the most important. *Mooring bitts* are small posts either in wood or cast iron around which the mooring rope or cable is wound to make fast the vessel to the wharf or quay. *Riding bitts* are larger and stouter, for the express purpose of 'bitting' the cable when riding at anchor off shore, or in a tidal way.

BOB-STAY.—A stay either of rope or chain, fixed to the *stem post* or *culwater*, and connecting at its other extremity to the sea end of the bowsprit.

BO'SUN.—Boatswain; a foreman sailor. He takes his orders from the mate. In purely American ships his place is often taken by the third mate—usually a hairy giant of forty years of age, who fights well, caring little for life (his own included); withal an excellent sailor, and superb disciplinarian at sea.

BOWLINE.—A very useful kind of sea knot where a large loop is required at the end of a hawser, or any other kind of rope. Upon completion of the knot it can be thrown over a mooring post or *bollard* for 'hauling on to.' A running knot may also be made of it.

BRACE.—A rope fixed to a *boom* or *yard-arm* by means of which the yard is trimmed. In square rig vessels the braces *trim* the yards horizontally; hence the terms *brace back*; *brace in*; *round up sharp*; *'haul in lee fore brace!'*

BRASSBOUNDER.—Ship's apprentice.

BREAK OF THE POOP.—From the top fore-edge of the poop-deck to the main deck.

BRIG.—A vessel with two masts, termed 'fore' and 'main.' Both masts carry square sail, but the mainmast carries a *gaff* in place of a square mainsail. This class of vessel is now rare. Its place being taken by the brigantine and schooner.

BUNT.—Briefly the central portion of a square sail. 'Standing at the bunt' means being at the mast point of the yard which supports that particular sail.

BUNT LINE.—Ropes or lines for gathering up the bunt of square sails to their yards. They are fixed to *cringles* in the *foot rope* of a sail. (Ordinary footropes are those attached to the yard upon which the sailor stands or kneels to take in sail.)

CATHEAD.—A timber or iron cantilever projecting from both bows to which the anchor, when being heaved, is first secured before 'fishing' it.

CATTING.—Securing the anchor to the Cathead.

CAULKING.—A process that constitutes in stuffing the seams of a wooden vessel with oakum, and then paying them with good hot pitch. The material is hammered in with a *caulking mallet*. The operation completed prevents leakage. In steel vessels there is no caulking at sea; the caulking—pressing or "veeing" by steel tool the edges of the steel plates—having all been done in the ship-yard during the vessel's construction.

CHAIN LOCKER.—The hold in the fore part of a large ship under the forecabin—into which the anchor chain descends.

- CHIPS.—Sailors' term for ship's Carpenter. Repairer aloft of all timber and ironwork damage; sounder of the ship's well; locator of leaks. Goes aloft and inspects all ironwork, and working parts; an indispensable man. Often gifted with great ingenuity. His position aboard is an independent one.
- CLEW.—The lower corner of a sail, and unless described otherwise is the after lower corner; the *tack* or forward corner corresponding is often called the *weather clew*. Each clew (in square rig), as the ship 'comes about,' becomes alternately a *tack* or a *weather clew*.
- CLEW GARNETS; CLEW LINES.—These are lines or ropes attached to the clews at their lower corners, whence the ropes run to a *block* fixed to the middle of the *yard*. On the lower sails or *courses* these ropes or lines are termed *clew garnets*. The name *lines* being only applied to the clew ropes of the topsails (tops'ls).
- CLEW UP.—To gather up a sail by its clew lines.
- COAMING.—A raised edge, often constructed of steel plate twelve inches or more deep, around a hatchway to prevent deck wash penetrating below. To the coaming are riveted *lugs* or *ears* to accommodate the *hatch-wedges* by means of which the hatch canvas covering is secured.
- COMPANION.—The ladder or staircase in a ship.
- COOK.—(Usually in name only on a sailing ship.) He is called at 4 a.m., cooks all meals by guess work. The most impertinent man on board—except in American ships. If he can cook he is found in a steamer.
- COUNTER.—That part of a vessel that extends beyond her *stern post*.
- CRANSE-IRON.—A ring or cap at the sea extremity of a bowsprit on which some holed lugs or ears are forged to take *bob-stay blocks*, *topmast-foreslay shackles*, or *screw tunbuckles*, and *bowsprit shrouds*.
- CRIMP.—Boarding-house master. Shanghaieing expert. One who knows that "honesty is the best policy," but invariably tries both.
- CRINGLES.—Loops or eyes formed in the *bolt-ropes* of sails, *clew cringle*; *reef cringle*: Ropes or *pendants* are passed through these eyes which enable the sail to be worked.
- CROJEK.—The Cross-Jack. In square rigged ships the lowest yard on the mizzen mast. The sail bent (attached) to the crojek is of little service, and therefore is not much used. The crojek is always hung; not hoisted with halyards. The sail attached is sometimes termed the *crojek*, and its yard the *crojek-yard*. More often the sail is called a mizzen *course*.
- DEADEYES.—Stout discs of wood through which holes (generally three) are pierced for the reception of thin ropes called *lanyards*. The deadeyes are employed as *blocks* to connect the *shrouds* to the *channel plates*.
- DECK-HOUSE.—Structure amid-ships in which the Carpenter, Bo'sun, Sailmaker, Cook and Steward are lodged. (See Deck Plan, page 12.)
- DECK PORTS.—Apertures in the bulwarks about two feet square, fitted with swinging flapdoors opening seawards to readily allow the sea to leave the deck as the ship rolls.
- DOCTOR.—Ship's Cook (slang), sometimes dubbed 'slush.'
- DRAUGHT.—The distance below water line. The vessel's draught

- is printed on the stern post—and often on the bow—in Roman characters. A vessel is said to *draw* so many feet of water, that is, her *draught* is so many feet.
- DUNNAGE.**—The name as applied at sea means loose wood, timber or rubbish scattered at the bottom of the hold for the purpose of raising the cargo to keep it dry, or to keep ballast off the ship's inside bottom.
- FIFERAIL.**—A rail or shelf into which a group of belaying-pins are fixed. They are often square and constructed around the base of the masts (see Plan of Deck, page 12). A short, narrow plank fitted with holes to receive belaying-pins, and fixed at the lower ends of shrouds. Sometimes called a *fiddle*.
- FISH.**—The name of the apparatus for hauling in the *flukes* of a ship's anchor. To the *cathead* is attached the *fish tackle*. On some ship's there is an *anchor davit*, which takes the place of the cathead.
- FORECASTLE BREAK.**—From the top aft edge of the forecandle deck to the open deck.
- FOREPEAK.**—A chamber in the bows of a vessel. Sometimes the forecandle is called the forepeak. But if the sailing vessel is provided with a top gallant forecandle, i.e., a forecandle raised above the main deck, the forepeak is usually immediately below.
- FORE-ROYAL-STAY.**—Its office is similar to that of a *forestay*. A wire rope or stay running from the fore-royal-mast head to the end of the jib-boom.
- FORESCUTTLE.**—The manhole in the forecandle which gives access to the chamber below called the forepeak.
- FORESTAY.**—A wire rope running from the fore lower masthead to the stem of the vessel, or to the ship end of the bowsprit. The object of which is to prevent the foremast under the weight of its sails—especially if the vessel be taken aback—from falling backwards.
- FORE-TOPMAST-STAYSAIL.**—The inner jib. The next sail forwards from the fore-stay sail. It runs from the fore-top-mast to near the end of the bow-sprit.
- FREEBOARD.**—That part of the vessel's side below the deck unsubmerged. The measured distance from the load line (amidships) where the distance is shortest.
- FULL-AND-BY.**—Sailing with the wind ahead of the beam, i.e., *against the wind*. It is to be noted that no vessel can sail directly against the wind, but only within a certain angle of it; or, nautically speaking, within a certain number of points (compass points) of it. Six points is practically the limit which a four-master mercantile barque can sail against the wind. Fore-and-aft craft, however—schooners, yawls, etc.—often sail within five points, and even four points. Racing yachts can sail sometimes still a little closer. e.g. The wind dead north, a square rigged vessel in excellent trim would probably be successful in sailing W.N.W. (West North West) or E.N.E. (East North East). Which means six points.
- FUTTOCK PLATE.**—An iron plate or platform at the masthead set athwart the ship. Its use lies in extending the topmost shrouds in order to present more lateral support to the topmast.
- GASKETS.**—Small rope *lashings* by which a sail, when furled, is secured to a yard, boom, or gaff. There is the *bunt-gasket* (the

- middle attachment) ; the *quarter-gasket* (halfway out towards the yard arm) ; and *yard arm gasket* (at the end, or outmost point of a yard).
- GIG.—An open clincher-built boat with a straight sheer (level top edge) and with a perpendicular stern. Something like a skiff. It belongs to the ship, and due to its lightness and smartness often used by the Captain for going ashore.
- HALF-DECK.—(See Plan on Deck, page 12). In a large ship the apprentices (altogether) sleep in the half-deck—their bedroom.
- HALYARD.—‘Haul Yard.’ A rope or chain by means of which a flag, sail, or yard is hoisted to position. It is also a *tackle* used for the same purpose. They are named after the spars, or sails upon which they act.
- HANDSPIKE.—A lever for prising or lifting heavy objects ; or for working a windlass.
- HANKS.—Rings made of iron or wood threaded on, and made to run up and down stays. Thus a foresail is attached to, and runs up and down, the forestay (wire rope) by means of hanks.
- HARD-TACK.—Sea biscuit.
- HATCHWAY. HATCH.—A large aperture in the deck through which cargo descends and ascends. When not in use the hatchway is roofed over by a series of thick planks called *Hatches*. The hatches in turn are tarpaulined (canvased) over and secured by *Hatch wedges* driven in iron brackets attached to and placed around the *hatchway coaming*.
- HAWSE.—The *horizontal* distance of a ship’s anchor cable. That portion of water which extends from the ship herself to the point on the water surface directly under which is her anchor.
- HOKKAH.—Any sailing ship (slang).
- IDLERS.—Sailor’s nomenclature for ship’s carpenter, sailmaker, cook and steward. These men work as hard as anyone on board. They work by day only.
- JACK ; JACKRAIL.—On a ship the term Jack, generally speaking, means something small, e.g., Jack-rail (small low rail)—an iron bar that runs all along the top of a yard.
- JAM.—English for the American “preserves.”
- KNIGHT-HEADS.—Small posts at the stem of a vessel between which the bowsprit runs. In many steel built vessels these are absent ; the steel bowsprit being built into the framework of the vessel.
- KNUCKLE-DUSTER.—An iron instrument weighing about 20z. that fits over the knuckles to add deadly force to a blow. Thugs, hooligans, and naturally criminal people often carry them—concealed.
- LANDYARDS.—Short lengths of rope used for tautening down the shrouds of a mast by the deadeyes. In more modern ships, landyards are superseded by long screws, resembling turnbuckles. Much labour is saved by the latter arrangement.
- LAZARET.—A chamber, under the poop deck, sometimes placed under the cabin, where certain ship’s stores are stored to be under control of the cabin.
- LEE.—Opposite to *windward*. The shelter side of a vessel from the wind.
- LIFTS.—Ropes reeved through blocks at the heads of the three or four

- masts (which altogether compose one mast) for the purpose of taking the weight of the yards ; thus enabling them to be *trimmed*, i.e., squared.
- LOG.—A book kept in the cabin and 'written up' daily by the mate, which records the ship's events during the past twenty-four hours—Speed of ship, weather, longitude and latitude, damages, etc.
- LOG (Patent).—A patent compact instrument usually of brass that is fixed to the taff rail, and which accurately records the speed of the ship. (It now supersedes the old-time sea-log—a tiresome, clumsy, and often inaccurate affair.) Particularly useful when navigating by 'dead reckoning.' In the latest arrangement the log can be read from the cabin or bridge.
- LUBBERS.—A sailor's term for landsmen, or anyone not versed in their own art. A contemptuous term. A "foolish person."
- LUBBER'S HOLE.—An aperture in the *futtock* plate, or top mast gear, through which access may be obtained to the masthead. Making access through the lubber's hole is slower but safer than that usually adopted by an active sailor ; for which reason such access is set down as being but worthy of a lubber, or inept person.
- LUFF.—To bring a ship's head closer to the wind.
- LUFF OF A SAIL.—The weather edge. Opposite to *leech* or *lee* edge. In fore-and-aft rig the luff is the edge of the main sail at the mast, and the leech the opposite, or after edge.
- LUFF TACKLE.—Any tackle designed for no particular place. Usually very strong ; capable of lifting a few tons.
- MAST.—A mast in one piece is termed a *pole-mast*. In all large ships, however, a mast is composed of several lengths, viz.—*lower mast* ; *topmast* ; *top-gallant mast* ; and sometimes a fourth mast called a *royal mast*, all attached and built up one above the other. In a steel-built ship the lower mast is usually built of steel and the others of timber. The lower yards also are often of steel.
- MATE.—Chief executive Officer. The captain's right arm. He keeps the log book. He directs the bo'sun. He attends to the bills-of-laden. His watch is the port-watch. He and the skipper navigate the ship.
- MATE (SECOND).—Next to mate. He takes the captain's watch. Attends to the storage of cargo below decks. His watch is the starboard watch. When heaving or dropping anchor he is found in the chain locker. He takes no part in the navigation—'shooting the sun,' etc., although quite capable of doing so.
- MATE (THIRD).—An officer rarely carried in American sailing ships (see Bo'sun). He is found generally in large sailing vessel's (except liners, where there may be 3rd, 4th, and 5th Officers). He is usually the oldest apprentice, raised to the position, at A.B.'s wages. Because of his youth generally a poor disciplinarian. Hence in British ships a sufferer of much insubordination and insolence. Due to this the second mate and mate find it occasionally an absolute necessity to 'straighten out' a few of the ring-leaders. No 'cheek' on American ships towards officers : "One-eyed Susan" (revolver) speaks only too quickly, and moreover the American laws defend rigorously, sometimes mistakenly, all in authority at sea.
- MOORING BITTS.—(See Bitts).
- NIPPER.—Youngest apprentice, also called 'Archangel.' In American ships a particular protégé of the Old Man.

- OLD MAN.**—Captain, Master, Skipper. (From time immemorial a ship's captain, no matter of what age, has been referred to by crews as 'The Old Man.') He is responsible to his owners for all connected with the ship. The A to Z of a ship.
- PIER-HEAD-JUMP.**—The action of a sailor who jumps aboard at the very last moment as the vessel is leaving dock or passing through the lock-pits to take the place of some other sailor who has been either left behind inadvertently; or "swallowed the hand-spike" (deserted). All pier-head-jumpers are not sailors—often nondescripts, or even convicts!
- POOP.**—(See Plan of Deck, page 12.).
- POOP LIGHTS.**—Small windows, often circular, that look out upon the main-deck. The cabin is sometimes provided with two or three of them.
- PORT-WATCH.**—That part of the crew who sleep on the port, or left side of the fore-castle looking from the main-deck. The mate works with this watch.
- REEVING.**—To pass something through a hole. To *reeve* a tackle is to pass a rope through its blocks. In American ships often pronounced 'roving.'
- ROACH.**—The curve in the foot and leech (side) of a square sail. It is cut deep to prevent the sail from fouling both the futtock plate and ropes about the mast.
- ROYAL.**—The royal sail is attached to the *royal yard*; which in turn is attached to the royal mast—the highest part of an ordinary mast. The royal mast also carries the *skysail*—the sail above the royal sail.
- SAILS.**—Sailor's term for the ship's sailmaker, and repairer of all canvas, and maker of sails. Not always carried on American ships; the mates and seamen are supposed, and generally are, fully competent to perform this work.
- SCUPPERS.**—Similar office to that of *deck ports*. Some scuppers are mere holes cut in the *waterways* and fitted with small pipes called *scupper hose*.
- SCUTTLE.**—A manhole. It also means 'a hole cut.' To scuttle a ship means to cut or drill a hole in her sides or bottom to allow the water to enter, and thus sink her.
- SHANGHAIED.**—Taken to sea without consulting the person taken; usually accomplished by 'dopeing' (drugging) the victim. In Great Britain usually accomplished by making the victim dead-drunk. 'Shanghaieing' was a heinous practice resorted to when ships could not leave a harbour because of crew shortage. By the practice, both captain and crimp made money—blood money. To-day (1925) there is little or none of it in Great Britain, or North America; but still obtains in certain South American ports and elsewhere.
- SHEETS.**—The rope attached to a sail in order that it can be worked, i.e., hauled up, or let out, as conditions may require. (Sheets are *not* sails, as some poets would have us believe.) Sheets take their name from the sails they work, e.g., main-sheet, the sheet that works the main sail, *jib-sheets*, etc. To *rally out a sheet*, is, to let it run out.
- SHIP.**—To a sailor this means a *full-rigged ship*, i.e., a vessel with three masts, each mast fitted with royal masts. She carries all

- square sail ; but her mizzen, or aftermost mast, carries a *spanker* or *driver*, in place of a square sail or *course*.
- SHORT-SNUBBED.**—In a general maritime way of speaking *snub* means, to check suddenly. A vessel riding *short-snubbed* means she is riding close, or over her anchor cable. No *hawse*.
- SHROUDS.**—Powerful wire ropes supporting a mast laterally. They are named after the masts and spars they support, e.g., the *main* or *mizzen shrouds*, *topmast shrouds*, *bowsprit shrouds*, etc. To them is attached by '*seizings*' small ropes called *rallines* which form a rope ladder, by means of which the crew climb aloft.
- SKILLY (SPOTTED DOG).**—A grotesque mixture of pounded sea biscuit with small lumps of meat (the "Spots") and grease scrapings from the cook's copper. The cook, after boiling it, elevates the mess by terming it (if the Old Man be near) "Soup !" It is served at dinner time to the forecabin "herd." (This "dish" is not to be confounded with *Cracker Hash*—another wonderful sea cookery mélange consisting of pounded sea biscuit companioned with dried peas—"Shot") boiled for half an hour with a lump of very fat pork.
- SLINGS.**—In a square rigged ship the sling of a yard is at the middle point, i.e., at the mast point.
- SPANKER.**—The gaff sail on the mizzen mast of a ship. Also termed a *driver*. In a four-masted barque, however, it is attached to the fourth or jigger mast.
- SPUNYARN.**—Popular sea name (slang) for the Bo'sun. (See Bo'sun).
- STARBOARD WATCH.**—That part of the crew who sleep on the starboard, or right side of the forecabin looking from the main-deck. Sometimes dubbed the 'starboardlines.' The second mate works with this watch.
- STEEVE.**—The angle a bowsprit makes with the horizontal. To-day it lies almost level compared with those fitted to early or Elizabethan ships.
- STEWARD.**—Prepares the cabin meals only. (The cook and his assistants "cook" them). Waits on the cabin, has his own pantry. In American ships generally negro.
- STUNSAIL.**—A narrow sail run out beyond the leech or edge of the ordinary sail. It is bent to a stunsail (pronounced 'stuns'l') boom—a yard attached to the ordinary yards. Stunsails waned in vogue during the eighties. Few, if any, sailing ships carry them now (1925).
- SWIFTER.**—Extra stays ; manila or wire ropes, usually placed forward of those main stays which they assist ; for example the *backstay fore swifters* in a large sailing ship. An extra pair of shrouds, set forward of the ordinary ones, are called *swifters*.
- TACK.**—The tack of a sail is the forward lower corner ; also called the *weather clew*. The small rope that holds the weather clew down is called a *tack*.
- TACKLE.**—A mechanical purchase formed by the combination of a length of rope, with two or more blocks.
- TAFF RAIL.**—The rail around the aftermost part of a vessel.
- T'GARN'S'L.**—Top-gallant-sail. The sail under the Royal—if carried.
- TO BELAY YOUR JAW.**—To shut up !

- TO LUFF ROUND.—To bring a ship's head right up to the wind.
- TOPSAILS (Tops'ls).—The topsails in a square rigged ship are those immediately above the *courses* (the lowest and largest of the sails). There are two to a mast—the *upper topsail* and the *lower topsail*. A ship thus fitted is said to carry double topsails. These are designated and known by the masts and yards upon which they stand, e.g., *Main-topsail*, *Fore-lower-topsail*, etc.
- TO TACK.—To change the course of a vessel when sailing from one direction to another. The object of tacking is to work the vessel against the wind. To tack means to 'go about.' To tack ship is the opposite to *wear* ship which means bringing her stern to wind and not head to wind.
- TRUCK.—The wooden cap at the top of a flag-pole or mast. It is holed to accommodate flag or *signal halyards*.
- UNDER THE LEE.—That is, under the *shelter* of a vessel or shore. If the vessel anchored near the shore, with the wind blowing off the shore, we are said to be lying under its lee, i.e., under its shelter. But a lee shore is a shore upon which the wind blows directly.
- WAIST.—That part of the vessel that lies between the *beam* and the *quarter* (see Plan of Deck, page 12). Particularly is this the case where a vessel has a quarter deck.
- WIND'ARD; WINDWARD.—Towards the wind. A vessel's, or any other object's side upon which the wind is blowing. Often termed the Weather Side.
- WIND-JAMMER.—Any kind of large sailing ship (slang).
- WEEVIL.—A beetle—like a small cockroach in form—often found in sea biscuits. Scientifically a "curculio."

